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N64 MAGAZINE

OVER 20 NEW GAMES INSIDE!

SNOWBOARD KIDS

New name, same great game

FULL UK REVIEW INSIDE

TUROK 2
First pictures!

1080° SNOWBOARDING
Exclusive review!

WORLD EXCLUSIVE!

mystical ninja starring GOEMON

Massive UK review inside!

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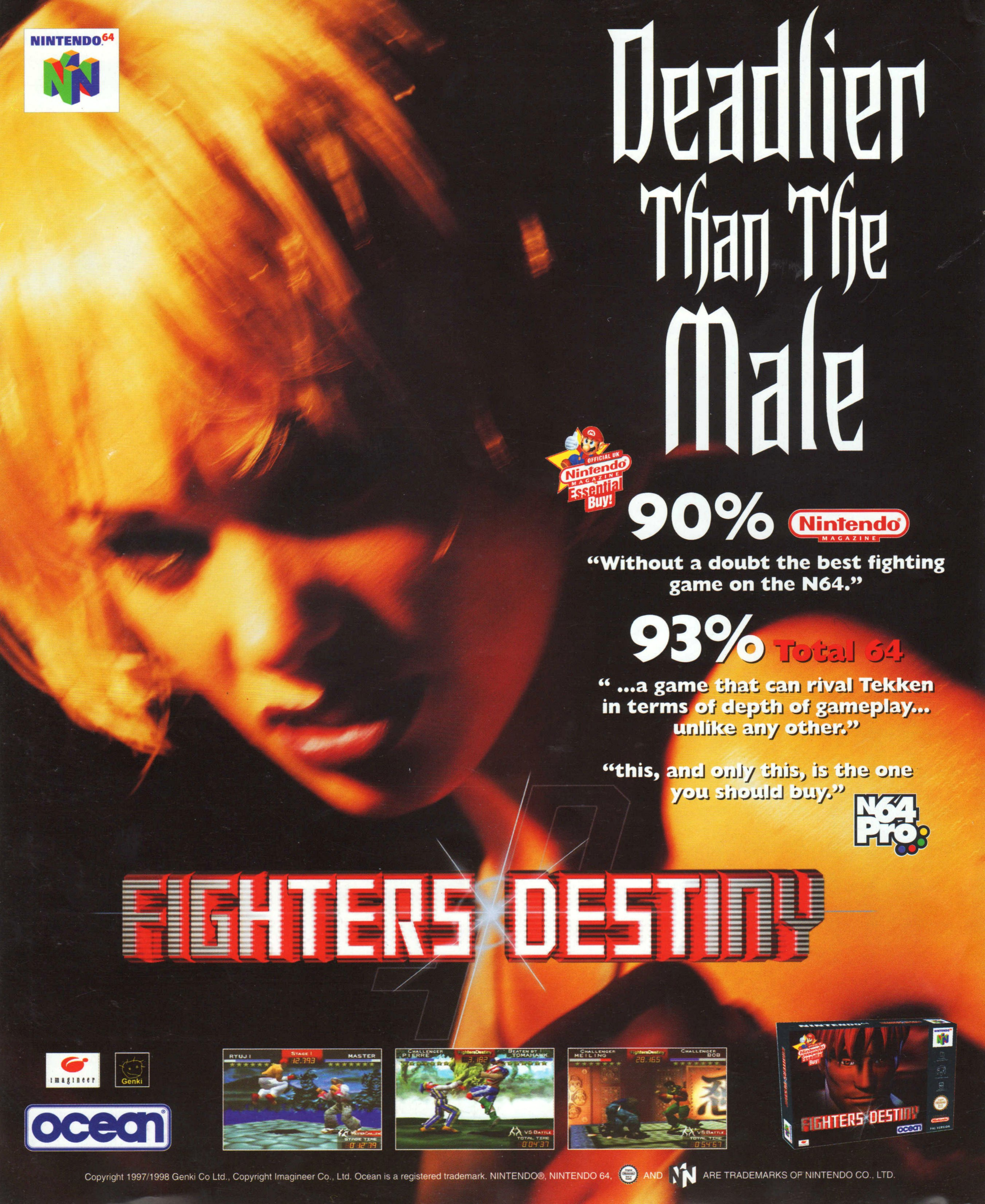
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" ...a game that can rival Tekken in terms of depth of gameplay... unlike any other."
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HOW N64 MAGAZINE WORKS

N64 Magazine is Britain's best selling Nintendo 64 mag. Here's why:

- We won't give anything our 'Star Game' award until we've played it right through to the end. That way we can be sure it really is worth buying.
- Because we're independent from Nintendo, we can write completely honest reviews. If a game's awful we'll say so.
- Because we're independent from Nintendo, we can also review games as soon as they come out in Japan and America, so you know which games are worth looking forward to.
- The main focus of **N64** Magazine is always the N64 games you can actually buy here in the UK, however. We never pad out the magazine with huge articles about games that only the Japanese can play.
- Our correspondents in Europe, Japan and America supply us with exclusive first-hand news every month. We don't copy rumours and speculation off the Internet.
- **N64** Magazine is written by the most experienced Nintendo fans in the business. We know what we're talking about, so we're able to cram every page with useful information and advice.

Don't be fooled by feeble imitations!

WELCOME TO N64 MAGAZINE

I've just tidied my desk. It's been about a foot deep in stuff for a couple of weeks now, and I'd quite forgotten what a beautiful wood-effect plastic topping it has. I even found a half-eaten Kellogg's Chewy Marshmallow Square (my very favourite snackstuff) which improved the quality of my morning no end. After I'd picked the fluff off it, that is.

Why the thick coating of Nintendo-related jetsam? Well it's been a very busy month here at **N64** Magazine. First of all, we had Tim struggling to complete *Mystical Ninja starring Goemon* before he jetted off to start one of the longest holidays known to mankind. He didn't quite manage to finish it – which must be good news for the lifespan of the game – and, as I write this, he's probably worrying about it somewhere on a white, sandy beach in the southern hemisphere. Probably. His exclusive review of the N64's first, English RPG starts on page 32.

Halfway through the month, *Snowboard Kids* (renamed just as we'd finally got the original *Snobow Kids* spelling licked) arrived and stopped us working for about two days. The PAL conversion really is impressive, and shows just how committed Nintendo are to ensuring that even third-party games arrive in Europe in the best-possible shape. Our review starts on page 46, and the icy theme continues on page 52 with Acclaim's ice hockey sim, *NHL Breakaway*.

This month also saw the launch of the Pocket Camera in Japan. The camera unit and printer sold out on the first day – not surprising really as we think it's one of the best toys we've ever played with. Take pictures, edit them a bit, print them out, stick them all over the place – brilliant fun! You can see how Max got to grips with it all on page 64.

And finally, just as things were about as hectic as they could get, *1080° Snowboarding* arrived from Japan. It's quite unlike any Nintendo N64 release we've yet played and a real showcase for the N64's powers. See what you think of it on page 56.

What with everything else, then, this must be one of the most packed issues of **N64** Magazine we've ever produced. And here comes Andrea with… yep a load more paper work to… NO! Don't put it there… Oh.

JAMES ASHTON
EDITOR

GO! GO!

N64 MAGAZINE FOR NINTENDO 64 FANS

Issue 14, April 1998

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MYSTICAL NINJA STARRING GOEMON

"Hello! My name's Goemon. I'm just back from chasing music hall impresarios around medieval Japan. You can read about my adventures in this exclusive review of the N64's first English RPG."

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N64 MAGAZINE ARENA

Reviewed, rated... and completed!

Starts on page 32

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Will this keep us occupied while we wait for Nintendo's *Courtside*?

46 **SNOWBOARD KIDS**
It's had us reaching for our mittens with glee.

52 **NHL BREAKAWAY '98**
A rival for *Gretzky*? Find out which is the coolest ice hockey game in town.

IMPORT ARENA

The latest Japanese and American games.

Starts on page 54

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The wait's finally over. Nintendo deliver the snowboarding fest to Japan, on time!

62 **AUGUSTA MASTERS**

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N64 Magazine FUTURE LOOK

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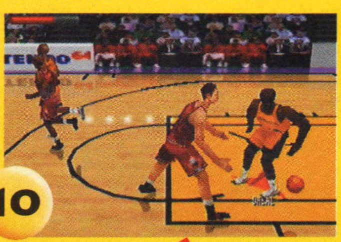
Dracula bashing from Konami. It's looking mighty scary already!

6

BUCK BUMBLE
Oh to be a bee. And shoot things. Odd? Look here.

8

NBA COURTSIDE
A sporting first from Nintendo and Left Field.



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N64 Magazine HOW TO...

Guides to ease you through life.

Starts on page 64

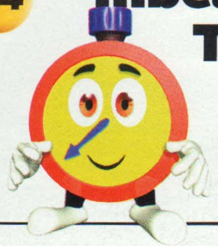
64 **...get to grips with your Pocket Camera**

Camera, Printer, Game Boy. Hours of fun just waiting to be had.

70 **...smite all and sundry in Fighters Destiny**

Hard man Jes has been practising his moves. Oooh he's tough!

74 **...beat all your best Time Trial records in Diddy Kong Racing**



Earn yourself a place on our I'm the Best league table.

80 **...give the computer a good hammering on level 5 of ISS64**

Still a great game, a year after its release. Another reader shows us how it's done.

106 Where did all the games go? **N64** Magazine has the answers.

RAIDERS of the LOST CART

PLANET 64

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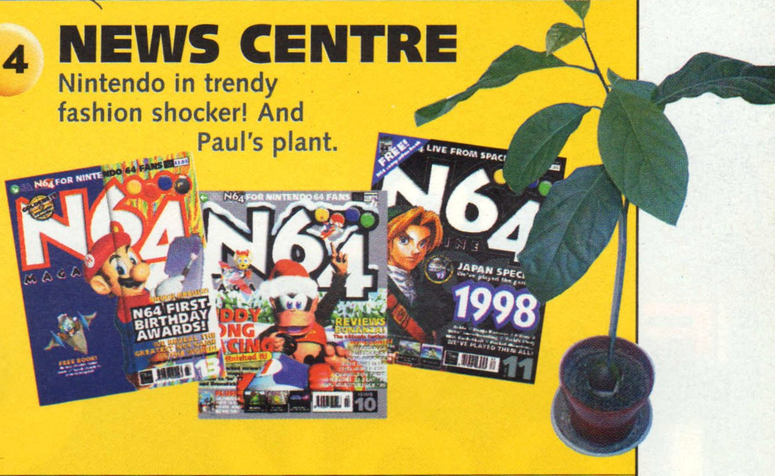
14 **NEWS CENTRE**

Nintendo in trendy fashion shocker! And Paul's plant.



18 **COMING SOON...**

Plenty of N64 games on the horizon – we pick the best and Tim chats with *Shadowman* developers Iguana UK.

REGULARS

86 **TIPS EXTRA** Tips. Yes. And cheats. Er. And some other fantastic game bits.

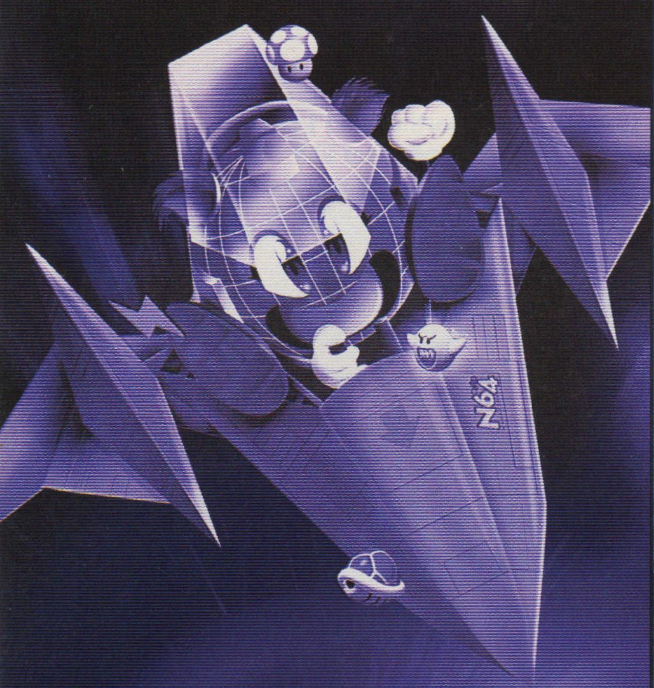
94 **CLUB 64** Praise, complaint, abuse, astronomers and beards. All here.

98 **SUBSCRIPTIONS** Fast becoming the only way to guarantee yourself a copy.

99 **BACK ISSUES** QUICK! There aren't many left.

100 **DIRECTORY** It's getting bigger all the time. Every game ever reviewed.

114 **N64 MAGAZINE ISSUE 15** Stand to attention! Issue 15 plans hinted at. Oddly.



N64 MAGAZINE

FUTURE LOOK

Your first look at the ***BIG*** new N64 games!

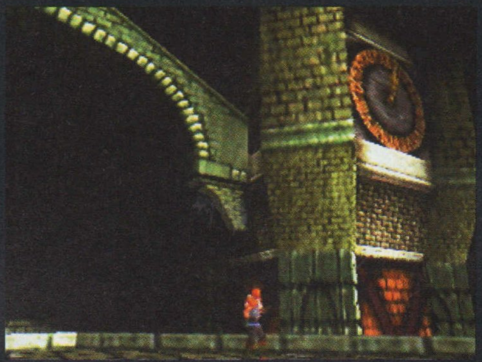
this month

CASTLEVANIA 64 6
Konami's new blood-fest.

BUCK BUMBLE 8
A shoot-'em-up with a difference.

NBA COURTSIDE 10
The first sports sim from Nintendo.

WANT MORE NEW GAMES?
Check out the Coming Soon section of Planet 64 on page 18! GO! GO!



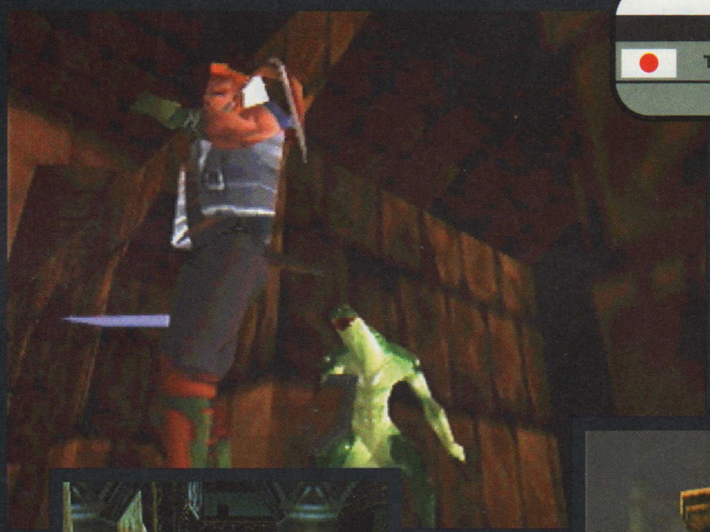
△ Another huge space. And is that a clock up there?

△ Look at the depth of this room – it goes on for miles! Konami have no need for distance-shortening mist.

▽ Real-time lighting effects, ahoy! Essential for the day/night biz.

CASTL

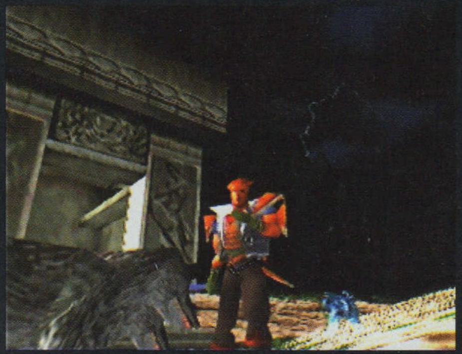
Castlevania 64	
KONAMI	
TBA	1
UK release TBA	



◁ These are the first in-game shots smuggled out of Konami so far.

◁ A third-person adventure by the looks of it, so that'll be you then. Nice hair!

'BATHING IN THE FOUNTAIN STRICTLY PROHIBITED!' read the notice. ▽



△ *A multi-headed dog? Could this be like Cerberus, the guardian of the gates to the underworld?*

▽ *Dracula's castle, we'd warrant, and the setting for your adventures.*

Blood brothers

While hard news on *Castlevania 64* remains elusive, Konami have at least let slip the four characters involved in the game:

SCHNEIDER BELMONT

A beginners' character. Balanced abilities. Member of the vampire-hunting Belmont clan.

CORNELL REINHART

Can turn into a wolf at will. Prefers hand-to-hand combat.

CARRIE EASTFIELD

A 12-year-old girl. Fights with magic powers. Likely to be the most challenging character to use.

KOLA

?

Slow and strong. A power character whose weapon of choice is a chainsaw.

NEW PICS!

EVANIA 64

all day and all of the night

Whatever Konami's new vampire game ends up being called ('Castlevania 64', 'Dracula 3D', 'Legend of Dracula 64' – the only thing that's certain is that name will differ between its Japanese and Western releases), along with *Hybrid Heaven*, it's one of their brightest development jewels. From the moment that Konami showed a short video of the game, back in early 1997, expectation surrounding it has been running at levels normally reserved for one of Nintendo's biggies.

Making a radical departure from a series that started life on the NES, *Castlevania 64* will be a fully three-dimensional game, looking completely different to its most recent incarnation (on the PlayStation as *Castlevania: Symphony of the Night*). As *Castlevania* games of old were considered to be the epitome of 2D platform game excellence, switching the game into 3D presents Konami with as much of a challenge as Nintendo faced adding the extra dimension to *Mario*.

But while it may be all-change graphically, *Castlevania* retains its strong undead theme. The aim of the game is to find and defeat Dracula himself but, between him and you lie all manner of obstacles – from those based on puzzle solving, to the more action-orientated blood-letting kill-fests. On your travels to meet the king vamp himself, you'll have to defeat all manner of blood hungry, vein-sucking legions of the undead – subject matter that's certain to finish off the N64's reputation for cuddly lovable games, once and for all.

From these latest shots, it appears that *Castlevania 64* will be a third-person adventure (i.e. one in which you can see the character you play), in the same vein as *Goemon* or *Zelda*. Before you start your game, you'll have the option to choose one of four different characters. Depending on the person you opt to 'be', your route through the game will change and – if you're successful – a unique ending sequence will play. With the four characters already showing markedly different abilities and fighting specialities, it's clear that *Castlevania* will have plenty of replay value, as you try to battle your way to Dracula in four different tactical styles.

Depending on the person you opt to 'be', your route through the game will change complete with a unique ending sequence.

However, the one feature that's caused the most interest in *Castlevania 64* so far is the game's use of time. Konami have said that as you play, time passes realistically; bright sunlight slowly fades first to dusk and then to night. Far from this being a cosmetic touch, though, gamers' tactics will have to adapt to the changing conditions, as vampires scared of daylight come out hunting in the dark. From a technical point of view, it means that Konami's programmers will have to find a way of lighting the game's scenery in such a way that it can reflect the changing time of day – no mean feat.

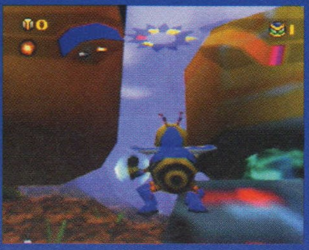
N64 Magazine's sources in Japan suggest that Konami won't be showing *Castlevania 64* at the Tokyo Game Show in March. However, if they change their minds, you can be absolutely certain that our operatives will be pushing their way to the very front of the crowd to see it. As for a release date, a heart-wrenching 'early 1999' seems the most likely. Until then, keep the garlic handy.

TO BE CONTINUED... More updates on *Castlevania 64*'s progress through the year.

EXCLUSIVE FIRST PICTURES OF ARGONAUT'S DEBUT N64 GAME

◁ Whatever that is, it's big and slow and really needs shooting.

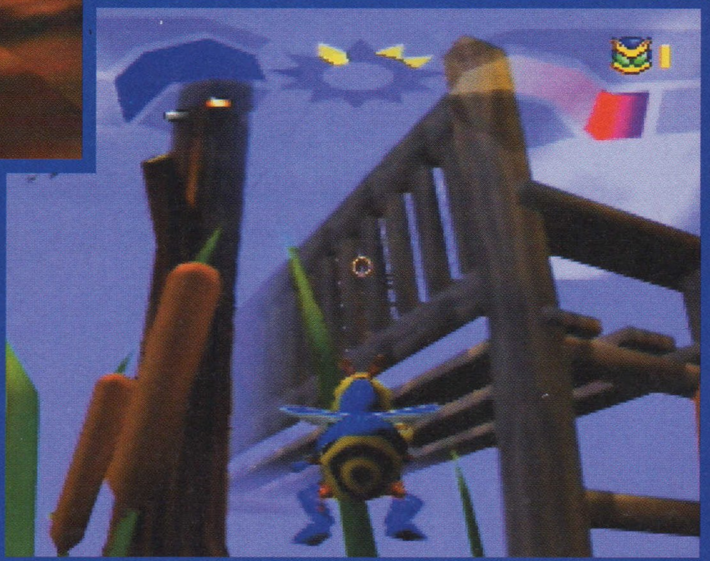
Fly down the little stream, avoiding the fat bulrushes. ▽



BUCK

△ Shot enemies flutter to the ground to die.

An enormous park bench looms up at Buck. ▷



We broke the news that Brit boys Argonaut were working on a couple of N64 titles way back in issue 7. Since then, the company that co-developed the Super FX technology that powered the SNES *Starfox* (amongst others) has found itself a publisher, and let us have a play on the first of its two games.**

Buck Bumble is a flying shoot-'em-up. You play as the hero Buck, a bumble bee with more than honey on his mind and an array of weaponry that makes a simple sting look like the least of anybody's worries. For, unlike most bees we know – where the dangerous bit is definitely at the back end – Buck likes to grasp a variety of side arms in his front right leg and loose off all manner of destruction at his enemies.

And it's because Buck's a whole *inch* of bumble bee that he sees his world slightly differently to us. Everyday objects, such as plant pots and park benches, loom at him like monolithic constructions, as big to Buck as houses and office blocks are to us. As we swooped low in our first game, we found ourselves following the line of a small creek – as wide as a river to Buck – and having to weave in and out of bulrushes sticking up like enormous pines. In a way, the game gives the same feeling as *Micro Machines*, except that *Buck* provides far greater freedom to move and explore.

And – along with the crisp graphics – it's *Buck*'s smooth animation and control that were the standout feature of the single-level demo that we played. When flying, a speed-up/slow down button system governs speed, while the analogue works in the same way as *Starfox* and allows smooth aerial manoeuvres. Some *Buck* stunts are already present – including a very satisfying loop-the-loop – and our hero bee also has the option of landing and using his six legs to beetle about on the ground.

The game offers complete freedom of movement – much like the all-range mode in *Starfox* – and the amount and range of scenery that can be seen at any one time is very impressive. Misting is inevitably used to cover up objects in the far distance, but Argonaut's programming is good enough to never leave you feeling too hemmed in or constricted by the white stuff. This is just as well, because *Buck*'s top flight speed means that anything you're flying towards comes at you pretty quickly.

At the moment, background story and game structure are vague. Roughly: mechanical alien insects have taken over the world and it's your job to swat them back from whence they came. Shooting down robot bugs earns Buck weapon power-ups, which appear to us to be time-limited, and each level is likely to have a specific set of objectives to complete. However, other than shooting some mosquito-like robo-creepies and engaging a large spider crawling around on the floor, there was little else to do in the very early development cart we played.

There's clearly a lot more of *Buck Bumble* to come, and Argonaut and Ubi Soft are playing their cards close to their chest. If any game's got the pedigree to succeed, though, it's this one and we'll be watching future developments with an eager and careful eye.

BUMBLE

insecticide: life up the creek

Buck Bumble
UBISOFT/ARGONAUT
TBA | 1
UK release **September**

As you'd expect, there are stunts to be perfected.

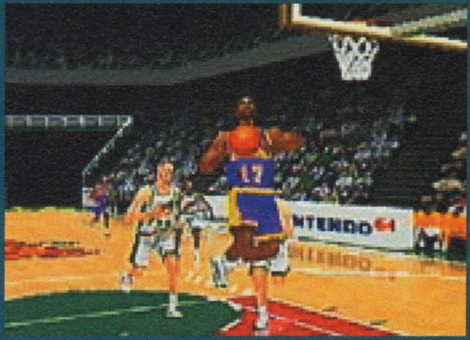
This looked to us like the exit to the next level, but we couldn't get in.

Buck makes a ground investigation of a mushroom.

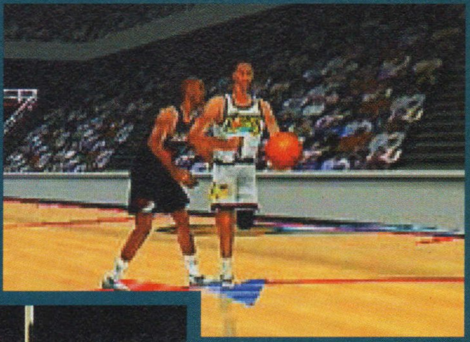
TO BE CONTINUED... We'll be tracking *Buck Bumble*'s progress right up to its release date in September.

THE LATEST PICS OF NINTENDO'S FIRST SPORTS SIM

Sharply designed players, at least. Which is more than can be said for this month's NBA Pro.

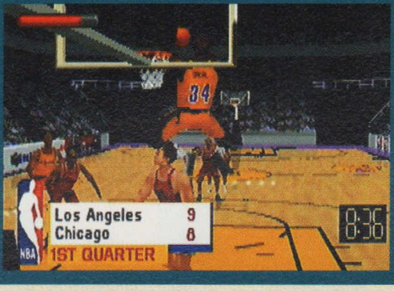


Aaaaand dunked! The blue-clobbered, erm, forward player slams it home in silkenly animated circumstances. Bootiful.



All the matches are graced by some gorgeously realised special moves...

Look at those reflections. Go on, have a good gander. Now look at the way the player's reaching out. Mmm.



...including finisher-offers like this'n. Also expect through-the-legs manoeuvres and finger spinning. Nice, that.

NBA Courtside	
NINTENDO	
June	1-4
UK release TBA	

NBA COU

Things have certainly come on a bit since we last brought you news of Nintendo's basketballer in Issue 11. In fact, so impressed are we that we've decided to give it its very own "Future Look" feature. (No faint praise this when you consider that the office reaction to basketball games is usually one of outrageous profanity.)

So, what's new then? Well, the graphics have been given yet another tweak and are now looking most impressive. Admittedly, it's hard to get too excited about "fully motion captured, polygonal players" especially as every company this side of the moon seems to be using them these days. But I think you'll agree with us when we say that these screenshots are looking particularly special.

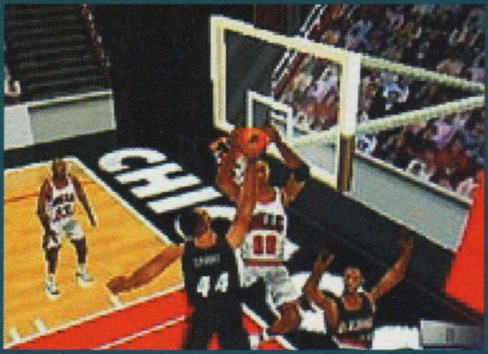
Thankfully, its not just the visuals that have received the attention. As well as giving you pretty pictures to look at, developers Left Field are also promising a "totally immersive background ambience" to get your sports juices flowing. What this basically means, is that as well as enjoying the usual hyperactive commentary, there should be lots of oohing and ahhing and cries of "get in" as well.

Perhaps the most exciting news though, comes from NOA Producer Henry Sterchi. Rather than just squeaking up and down the court in your funky hi-tops, *Courtside* players will be able to employ what the Sterchster likes to call "The Fireball Effect." Basically what this means is that you'll be able to pull off some corking special moves that will leave your opponents agog and any local passers-by/demented stalkers, in love with your phenomenal ball control.

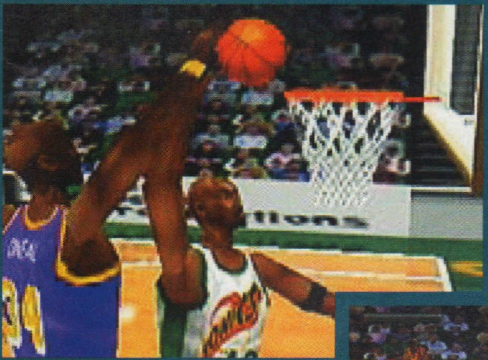
After the travesty that was *NBA Hangtime*, it's reassuring to know that such "special moves" will still have their roots in what we like to call "reality". There's going to be none of that "He's on fire", 720 degree spinning, jet-pak flying jiggery pokery. Instead Henry promises that everything will be "situational". Players who like to slam dunk will have specific hoop hanging moves, whereas your lay-up kind of guys can look forward to sailing around the court like ballet dancers, playing basketball. It's not just the point scoring moves that are being given the special treatment either. With a bit of effort you should be able to sneak out some rather luscious feints and spins as well.

Don't panic though, *NBA Courtside* also promises to keep Nintendo's easy learning curve, so you shouldn't be left trailing 500 points to nil after the first quarter. It's perfectly acceptable to get by with the A and B buttons alone. But introduce Z for a quick burst of "Turbo," the shoulder button for hassling the opposition and the C-buttons for switching team members and accessing special moves and you're talking serious levels of playability.

With full Rumble Pak compatibility, a rather tasty instant replay feature and an exhaustive NBA license, *Courtside* is shaping up very nicely indeed thank you. And I didn't say "Boom-shaka-lak" once.

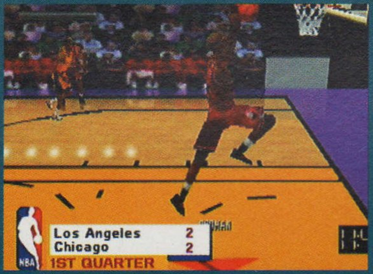


△ This geezer's dunking it. Dunking originates from the word, 'dunking' and means putting the ball hoop-ward.



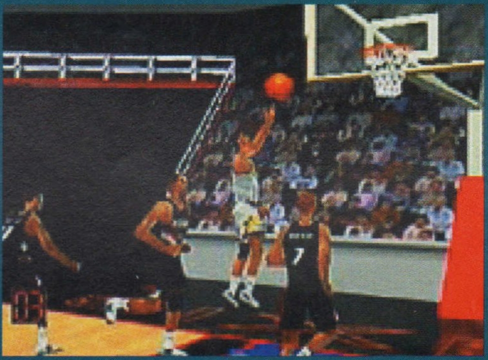
△ A variety of camera angles gives you the opportunity to play how you want. So, sit back as you admire a close-up of this...

...then, watch the Chicago Bulls' bestest leg it towards the basket with the grace of a small bald eagle. ▷



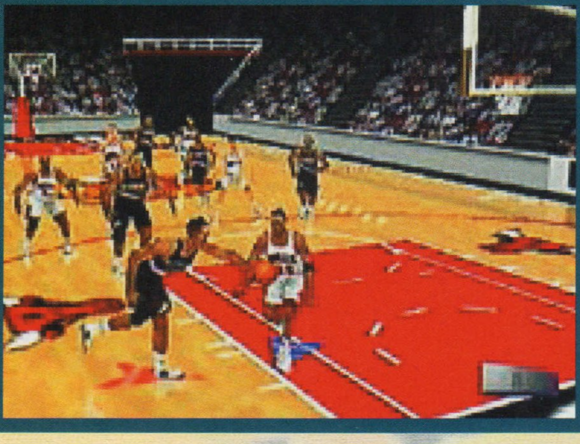
△ Injuries, tactics, stats and short sizes. All vital ingredients in Courtside's expertness.

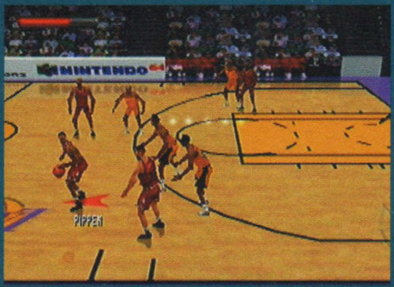
Ooooh, yes! Come on and boom-shak-a-lak your way to victory. Yep. Anyway... ▷



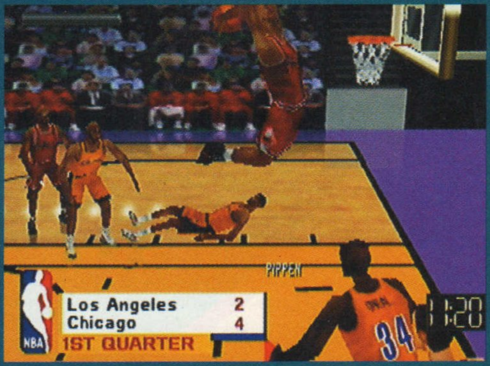
RTSIDE

see you in court





◁ A strange sort-of-at-an-angle view allows you a full look at the court. Now all you have to do is win.



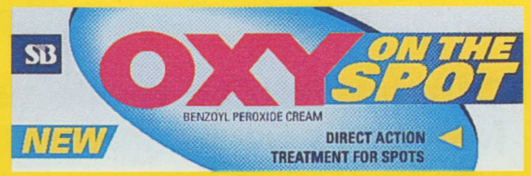
TO BE CONTINUED... We're hoping to have a full review of *NBA Courtside* in issue 18.

ESCORT
OUR WIVES WANT FUN!
CONTACT LOADSA GIRLS INSIDE!
GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!
PIN-UPS GALORE!
MAYFAIR
FINGER LICKING GOOD!
MAY
THE UK'S MOST SEXY

WHATEVER ELSE PUTS YOU

ON THE SPOT,

IT NEEDN'T BE SPOTS.



THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU JUST CAN'T HIDE, CAN YOU? ● RATHER LIKE THAT BIG SPOT ON THE END OF YOUR NOSE ● WELL, THAT WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT, WITH NEW OXY 'ON THE SPOT'* ● BECAUSE 'ON THE SPOT' IS A BRAND NEW DIRECT ACTION TREATMENT, SPECIALLY FORMULATED TO HELP ELIMINATE SUDDEN EMBARRASSING SPOTS ● AND LET'S NOT FORGET, YOU CAN ALSO HELP PREVENT ANY FURTHER ERUPTIONS, AND END UP WITH VISIBLY CLEARER SKIN, BY REGULARLY CLEANING WITH OXY DAILY WASH ● IT'S ONLY A PITY THAT LIFE'S OTHER LITTLE EMBARRASSMENTS CAN'T BE SO EASILY DEALT WITH ●●● SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM WITH NEW OXY 'ON THE SPOT'.

*Contains benzoyl peroxide. Always read the label. Oxy, Oxycute 'em and Oxy 'On the Spot' are trade marks.

PLANET 64

NINTENDO 64 NEWS CENTRE

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25th March
Next issue on sale
23rd April

Thanks to you

Official: you've made us Britain's best-selling Nintendo 64 Magazine.

A couple of weeks before N64 Magazine's official birthday – it's the 27th of March, by the way – we got a great present from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC). It's the ABC chaps whose job it is to accurately count the number of magazines sold each month and the great news they gave us was that – thanks to you – our official sales figures are now a healthy 43,576 copies a month. This makes us Britain's best-selling N64 magazine (by miles) and you, members of the biggest group of dedicated N64 gamers in the country.

Obviously, this is great news, but far from resting on our laurels, we've got big plans for the new year. Every issue from now until Christmas will come with one of our patented Double Game Guide + tips books and, who knows, we may be able to slip something extra in on top of that as well. The most important thing, though, is that we'll continue to print the most accurate reviews of every N64 game available, anywhere in the world. Cartridges are expensive and we know how disappointing it is when you're mislead into buying a duffer. As a result, we'll continue to give you the whole truth, on all games, as soon as we can get our hands on them. Games as bad as *Aero Gauge* and *MK: Mythologies* will get the marks they deserve (not seventies and eighties just so we can stay friends with the software companies responsible for them). And if we do give a game good marks – especially if it gets an **N64** Star Game Award – you can be sure that it's worthy of your time, and money.

What's more, because we're independent from Nintendo, we can review games as soon as they come out in America and Japan. The next year will see us produce the first reviews of the *Legend of Zelda: The Ocarina of Time*, *Banjo-Kazooie*, *F-Zero X*, *NBA Courtside*, *Conker's Quest* as well as the 64DD, its games and all the third party games released in America and Japan, well before they arrive here. When games do get a PAL release, we'll be there again, giving you an update on the quality of the conversion as well as, as many tips and secrets as we can ferret out.

The coming year will also – hopefully – see even more reader involvement, from the new Eager Waiting Charts at the front of the mag to Invention Corner at the back. Your entries to Skill Club,

SHORT CUTS

64-BIT SHINER

Head of Shiny Entertainment, Dave Perry, has indicated that his company is considering developing games for the N64.

Perry's most famous work is *Earthworm Jim* (SNES/Mega Drive/Saturn/PlayStation), but current titles in development are PlayStation/PC games *Wild 9's*, *Messiah*, *MDK2* and *RC Stunt Copter*.

From what we can garner at the moment, it seems that Shiney are only considering porting these games to the N64 rather than producing anything original. However, at this early stage, no firm decisions have been made.

PAUL'S PLANT

Taking a rest from the highly productive 30 days it had in January, this month has been one of consolidation for Paul's plant. Its new leaves are photosynthesising nicely, and one of its two originals has taken on a lustrous jade hue.

There's plenty of promise for next month, though, with the appearance of two fecund new growth buds, auguring well for the coming spring. Stay tuned!

I'm the Best and Star Performance have stunned us with your feats of gaming prowess, and Readers' Tips has demonstrated just what a dedicated bunch of gaming experts you are – we promise to keep on our toes and produce the magazine that you really deserve.

Thanks again for sending us to the top of the chart, then – we certainly couldn't have done it without you.

Nintendo no go Tokyo show

Continuing their policy of only going to their own parties, Nintendo decided to stay away from Tokyo's Spring Game Show, held on the 20th to 22nd of March. However, the rest of the Japanese software industry turned up in force, along with representation from major games companies from the rest of the world.

At the time of going to press, the show had yet to happen and the number of games on show from individual companies was far from finalised. However, developers definitely showing included Capcom, Namco, Konami, Imagineer and Human, any of whom might have used the show to launch new games.

News that did break before the show included a couple of game announcements from long-time N64 supporters Konami, whose *Rakugakids* appears to be a beat-'em-up with deliberately two-dimensional characters, fighting on highly colourful backgrounds. Roughly translated, *Rakugakids* means 'graffiti kids' and, we can only assume, that that's why the two characters shown in the one screenshot released so far, look the way they do. Interestingly, both appear to be casting full shadows on the background, which is novel if nothing else.

Our man in Tokyo, Max Everingham, will be bringing us a full report on the Show in N64/15. Until then, fingers crossed for Capcom and Namco.

Well, it certainly doesn't look like your average beat-'em-up. No.

When in Rome...

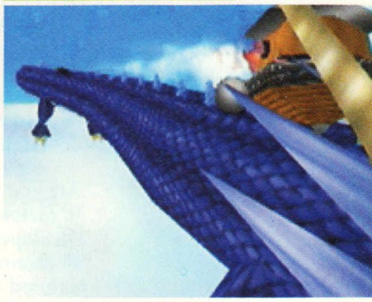
In an unprecendented step, Nintendo have held a week-long meeting of Europe's most important third party games developers, to discuss the future of the N64. These meetings have been a regular event in the past but, up until now, only Nintendo subsidiaries (such as Rare) and distributors (such as THE – the company who represents Nintendo in the UK) have been invited.

At the time of going to press, the meeting – held in a hotel in Rome from the 9th to the 13th of March – had yet to occur. However, it's believed that Nintendo were planning to use the occasion to make several key marketing and game announcements. The secondary purpose of the gathering was to encourage those third-party developers who have yet to release N64 games, to finally annouce their support.

Along with European companies who have already released N64 games (GT, Electronic Arts, Konami, Ubi Soft, Ocean and Interplay), companies such as Pysgnosis, Eidos/Core, BMG, Codemasters, Fox Interactive, ASCII Entertainment, Hasbro and Gremlin were also scheduled to attend. It's expected that there will be a flurry of new game announcements once the meeting has finished.

Nintendo have already sold 1.5 million N64s in Europe, with the machine actually on sale in some countries for far less than the year that the UK has enjoyed. Nintendo are happy with the progress they've made so far but obviously want to build on their success. Nintendo of America's chairman, Howard Lincoln, commented before the meeting that Nintendo wanted "to listen to third parties in order to get their ideas on how we can work more closely with them." More news next month.

There have been several notable third-party games for the N64. ISS64...



...and Goemon are two of the most accomplished.

GO! GO!

STOP PRESS: CHESS

Arriving just a few seconds too late to get an entry in our 'Coming Soon' section, here's *Virtual Chess* from Titus. Boasting graphical appearances from Titus the Fox, a tutorial, multiple difficulty settings and four different sets of chess pieces, *Virtual Chess*'s biggest draw is undoubtedly that it uses the same mathematical engine as the one that powered the winner of the World Chess Championship for Professional Microcomputers. Blimey! No soft touch then.

Obviously, the N64 will allow you to zoom in on the board, twizzle it around – all that sort of graphical tomfoolery – as well as play with one, two or three other human competitors. You'll also be able to save your games on cart rather than trust Nintendo's rather hit-and-miss memory paks. Out in June, we're already searching for a reviewer who knows the rules.

FANZINE FARM

"Eh? Whassat? Fanzines? Jethro's taken 'em down to the meadow."

NINTENDO 64 NUTS

Springing up in the **N64** office like a field of EU-subsidised sunflowers this month, is N64 Nuts, a fanzine with more colour on its cover than a bowlful of petunias. Inside, there are reviews of most of the top games, the revelation that *DKR*'s multiplayer mode is better than *Mario Kart* and a great feature on all the consoles we never saw, including the Amstrad GX4000 and the SNES CD-Rom. N64 Nuts is a 15-page burst of Nintendo action but, unfortunately, the author(s) forgot to put his name in it and we've lost the covering letter. If he writes in with the details, we'll spill the beans about how and where you can get hold of this mighty opus.

N-FORM

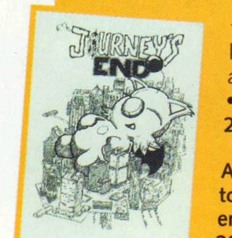
Continuing to be 'dedicated to anything Nintendo – past and present' N-Form is a hardy perennial and no mistake. Issue 4 comes with a free tips book on the SNES RPG *Shadowrun*, and an excellent round-up of some Nintendo ephemera that even Wil had forgotten about. The whole thing's in black and white, but that's not a problem and there are plenty of pictures to keep you going. If you're a bit of a Nintendo nostalgia freak, this could be just the job. Beats inseminating those heifers any day.

• **Issue 4 of N-Form is springing up at James Fry's house. To harvest yourself a copy send him a cheque for £2 to 30 Jennings Field, Flackwell Heath, High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 9ND**

JOURNEY'S END

As majestic as a Suffolk orchard in the mist of an autumn morning, Journey's End is a fanzine dedicated to Role Playing Games on whatever format they crop up upon. Screenshots make way for hand-drawn art and when RPGs are a bit thin on the ground (or completely absent as they have been up until now on the N64), Journey's End fills its pages with some rather succulent short stories. Described by its co-editor Toby Malamute as a competitor to Role Call (reviewed back in issue 11) but 'different enough to warrant readers buying both', forthcoming issues will be looking at *Goemon* in some depth, as the first RPG to arrive on the N64.

• **Issue 15 of Journey's End is available from Ann Simpson, 28 Dashwood Street, Derby DE23 6SU. It's priced at £1.50.**



Are you cultivating a fanzine? If you are and you'd like us to review it in this very column, pop us a copy in an envelope and post it off to: Fanzine Farm, N64 Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. If we've already featured an early issue of your printed pride and joy, don't worry, we'd still like to see the latest issue.

New Goods

All the best new stuff to go on, around or in your N64.

GAMESTER LX4 STEERING WHEEL WITH RUMBLE EFFECT

LMP • £70 • 0800 0813061

Do you remember the first arcade racing game you played where the steering system bit back? Out Run was our first, and while the LX4 (with Rumble Effect) doesn't offer true force feedback, the combination of its built-in rumbling and strong wheel re-alignment spring, are the closest you're going to get to it at home.

The rumble effect is controlled from a switch on the dash of the wheel and, in racing games that support rumble paks, some internal jiggery pokery inside the base unit actually vibrates the steering column as you drive. The effect is rather convincing and – dare we say it – probably the best implementation of the driving rumble available in the wide world of N64. We like it.

Elsewhere, the springs on the pedals have been tensioned up, allowing you to rest the weight of your foot on the pedal without depressing them. This means you can keep your foot poised on the brake, ready for that emergency stop. Full programmability is, of course, an option here and although you have to do this every time you power-up your N64, it's an easy enough process to remember after only a brief read through of the instruction manual.

The Gamester is designed to sit on a table top or flat surface (it comes with little rubber suckers). This is more constricting than Interact's V3 wheel which you can either sit astride *or* have on a table, and there's no adjustable angle malarky in the Gamester, either. Some of us disliked the force with which the wheel realigns itself – not 'realistic' apparently – but as all N64 wheels have to emulate the self-centreing behaviour of the analogue, auto-realignment shouldn't come as too much of a surprise.

At this stage, we have to say that nearly all console racing games are designed with joypads in mind, and we doubt very much that using any kind of steering wheel will actually lead to faster lap times. However, if you are determined to buy one, this is probably the best so far.

78%

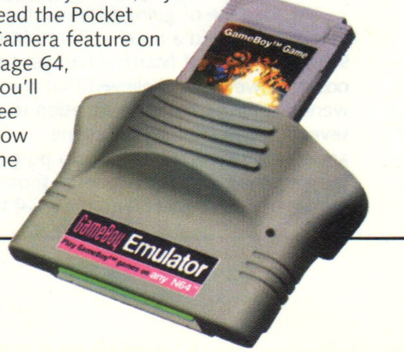
GAME BOY EMULATOR

Datel • £TBA • 01785 810800

Not a review we must point out – Datel have yet to finish manufacturing their emulators – but this bit of news was too juicy to hold back with. The Game Boy Emulator appears to do the same job for the N64 as the Super Game Boy (and recently launched Super Game Boy II) did for the SNES, allowing you to play your Game Boy titles in colour on the big screen.

The unit supports all Super Game Boy Game Boy titles, and a special colour palette system allows even those games without SGBII status to be played in colour. Stereo sound is catered for and – bizarrely – the emulator also includes loads of pre-loaded cheats for all major Game Boy titles. Good work, Datel.

Why should we be so excited about a Game Boy accessory? Well, if you read the Pocket Camera feature on page 64, you'll see how the



OFFICIAL: N64 'COOL'

In a bid to win the frock-making community over to computer games, Nintendo sponsored trendy fashion house Red or Dead's catwalk show, which took place during London Fashion Week on the 21st of February. As the Red or Dead models slipped coolly down the catwalk, a huge video screen playing excerpts from *Top Gear Rally*.

Pocket Camera cart can take and save 30 real-life images. Using Datel's emulator, you could (in theory) be able to display these images in colour on your TV screen and carry out all the editing functions contained in the Pocket Camera program, using your N64's controller.

Nintendo themselves have a similar cartridge for the Game Boy/N64 in the pipeline but, incredibly, Datel seem to have beaten them to it. As soon as we get hold of a sample, we'll let you know how successful they've been.

TBA

TRIDENT PAD

Spectra Video • £20 • 0181 902 2211

We reviewed the original Trident Pad back in the November issue (**N64**/8) where it earned a more than respectable 82%. These updated versions come in blue, red and yellow and, along with the original grey variety, now boast a soft, rubbery 'Protein Coat'. Apart from making the Spectra Pad smell rather nice (in a 'new' kind of way), this is also supposed to make the pad more comfortable to hold. Which it does, sort of.

Our original criticisms of the pad still hold, though. The buttons are a bit clicky, the analogue is a touch vague in the middle regions and the shoulder buttons pivot rather than depress properly. As a result, we like it slightly less than Interact's range of pads (especially the MakoPad), but for £20 you can't go too far wrong. And it smells nice.

82%

TRIDENT PRO PAD

Spectra Video • £25 • 0181 902 2211

The same as above, but with the wholly unnecessary addition of autofire and slow motion buttons. And an extra £5 on the price.

70%

RETROWORLD

with Jason Moore

Time, once again, to think back to the days when greenies were pound notes and Walkers still did Bovril flavour.

If I say the word "Panorama", chances are you'll immediately turn the page and disregard future slices of Retroworld as boring political nonsense. However, far from opening a forum on women's rights or safety in the workplace, I am in fact talking about one of Nintendo's greatest inventions. The Panorama screen range of Game & Watch machines represented the biggest breakthrough in handheld technology so far.

On the 28th of April 1983, Nintendo released their first colour tabletop machines, the seminal "Donkey Kong Junior", and "Mario's Cement Factory". Released in direct competition to the current flood of table tops from Tomy and Epoch (Grandstand in the UK), there really was no comparison. However, the addictive gameplay of standard G&W machines, with full colour graphics, wasn't enough to persuade customers to accept the high price tag (around £40 each).

By the beginning of 1983, it was clear that there were two distinct handheld markets; the smaller tabletop and the pocket game market Nintendo already ruled. They needed a machine to bridge the gap. The Panorama screen uses a slightly larger screen than standard G&W machines, with transparent colours overlayed onto the sprites. This dulls the LCD graphics so much that you would not be able to see them without a back light but, by placing the screen at a 45 degree angle from a mirror, light from outside the unit is captured and mixed with the image to create a bright, beautiful colourful display, so when playing you don't actually look at the LCD display at all, just a reflection of it.

On the 30th of August 1983, two panorama machines were launched; Snoopy, with a simultaneous release on tabletop, and Popeye. As a fixed, 45 degree angle would make the machine awkward, Nintendo devised a flip-up lid, providing a very neat solution. Despite their ingenuity, sales were still slow, with only five titles being released in the range; Snoopy, Popeye, Donkey Kong Jr, Mario Bombs Away and Donkey Kong Circus. The first three were all released in identical tabletop versions.

The real surprising thing about the panorama screen is the bright clarity it provides and the stark difference between it and its relatives. The system could easily have been used to make a full colour Game Boy, without decreasing battery time. Perhaps this is one trick Nintendo shouldn't have kept up their sleeves.

DONKEY KONG JNR – G&W PANORAMA

Probably Nintendo's favourite title, released in wide screen, tabletop and panorama versions, the game remains the same. Swing from branches, dodging birds, get the key and navigate the escalators of balloons and umbrellas in order to unlock the padlocks keeping your Dad imprisoned. Bach's Toccata and Fugue highlights Mario's debut as a baddie.

RETRORATING 80%

MARIO'S BOMBS AWAY – G&W PANORAMA

The first of two panorama only titles sees, Mario joining the army. Run left and right with one of five bombs, hold each one high and low to avoid the soldiers in the trees above trying to light them, and the cigarette ends littered on the floor. Pass each bomb to your comrade who will throw them above the trees. Manage to pass all five, and the soldiers in the trees are blown up. Simple, but maddenly addictive and the only game I can think of to feature someone smoking.

RETRORATING 78%

DONKEY KONG CIRCUS – PANORAMA G&W

The second panorama title sees our old friend DK being mistreated by Mario once more. This time DK has been forced to join the circus, balancing on a barrel while juggling pineapples. Move left and right catching the pineapples and dodging the flames from the barrels above. The best moment is watching Mario wet himself laughing when you get your hands burnt off.

RETRORATING 81%

PLANET 64 COMING SOON

Updating you on the N64 games of the future

This month including:

SHADOWMAN
TUROK 2
FORSAKEN
CASTLEVANIA 64
DUKE NUKEM: TIME TO KILL
HYBRID HEAVEN
WORLD CUP '98
BANJO-KAZOOIE
TONIC TROUBLE
BOMBERMAN HERO
POCKET MONSTERS SNAP

Murder!

That's right. YOU HEARD. Murder. And death. And, er, kill. Ing. After last month's Planet 64 fluff-a-thon, we look forward to the N64's death-riddled newcomers...

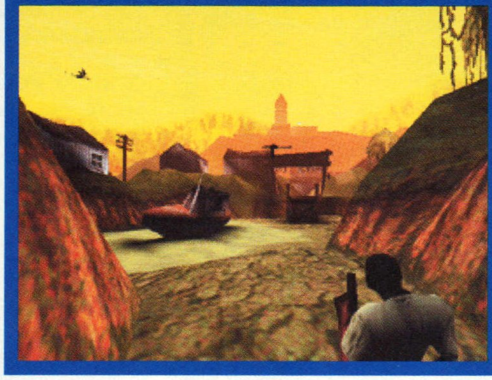
EXCLUSIVE!

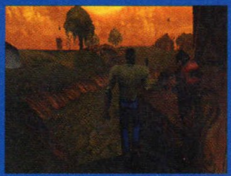
SHADOWMAN

ACCLAIM	64M	1	(UK) November	(US) November

Look – the horizon stretches for miles and there's not a hint of fog, just a few scrawny birds. Iguana have really pulled their finger out here.

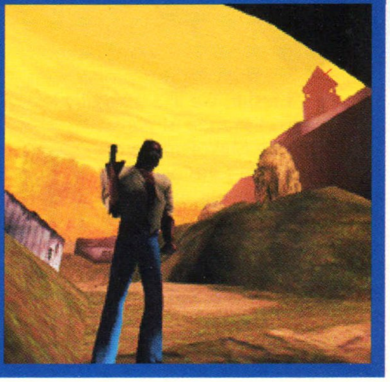
Iguana hope to have Shadowman driving some sort of vehicle during the game – a hearse maybe...





The Deadside – it's dark, dreary and just a little disturbing. A bit like Trowbridge really.

Mike LeRoi, destined to spend the rest of his life with a gun in his hand.



Currently being developed in Stockton-on-Tees by Iguana UK, *Shadowman* follows closely in the footsteps of *Turok*. It draws its storyline from Acclaim's own comic book series, and weaves its tale around the exploits of English graduate, and occasional assassin, Mike LeRoi, who possesses the ability to travel between the real world of New Orleans and the Deadside – a sort of purgatory – after being put under a curse by a voodoo priestess.

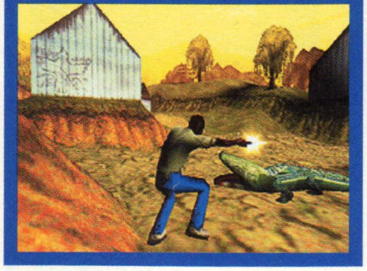
All of which sets the scene nicely for a 3D, third-person adventure of the *Tomb Raider* variety. Except, of course, for its violence. See, the Deadside is split into different worlds and the unfortunately named LeRoi has to visit all of them, dabbling in black magic and killing on the way. Whilst stopping an underground network. Which, in itself, is a hive of murderers and lunatic. Who, it has to be said, have a penchant for bloodshed. Nasty.

Death! Kill!

There are buildings to explore – if you're feeling brave enough, that is!

You might need a pillow to hide behind for this one.

Unlike the PC version, there are no naked people – or animals for that matter, although we can't see any pants on the croc!

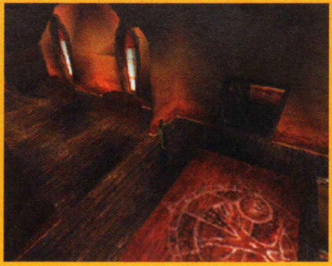


Soooo, *Yoshi's Story* it's not and – unsurprisingly – Nintendo have been paying close attention to its development. But, *Shadowman* spells a welcome and interesting change in direction for the N64, fusing a *Mario*-esque engine with a dank, disturbing story and some fearsome environments, including deserted industrial units and ghost towns. All of which adds up to an impressive feeling of immersion. And, with Iguana UK currently beavering away on Acclaim's other much-anticipated N64 title, *Forsaken*, it looks like 1998 could be the year of the, erm, lizard. Expect to hear more from *Shadowman* in the autumn...

NEW!

Iguana UK on... Shadowman

As part of N64's growing commitment to providing the latest info on the latest games, we're going to be talking a lot more to the most important people behind them. This month, we caught up with *Shadowman*'s Creative Director, Guy Miller...



N64: How did Shadowman end up at Iguana UK?
One morning, a whole load of comics – sent to us from Acclaim's comic division – landed on our doormat. We looked through them and Shadowman just sort of jumped out at us, gun in hand, and threatened to blow all our brains out if we didn't make a game out of him.

N64: There's been some doubts about the N64 version, though...
The nudity has raised some doubts, yes. In the PC version we've had naked animals with their dangly bits showing. Oh, and naked dead people, too. But we've covered all that offensive, naughty stuff up for the Nintendo version. Even the fish in *Shadowman 64* now wear pants. We've still got blood though. It seems you can have violence, but no nakedness, even if that nakedness is intrinsic to the plotline (i.e. the naked dead people are naked because they've just got up off the mortuary slab).

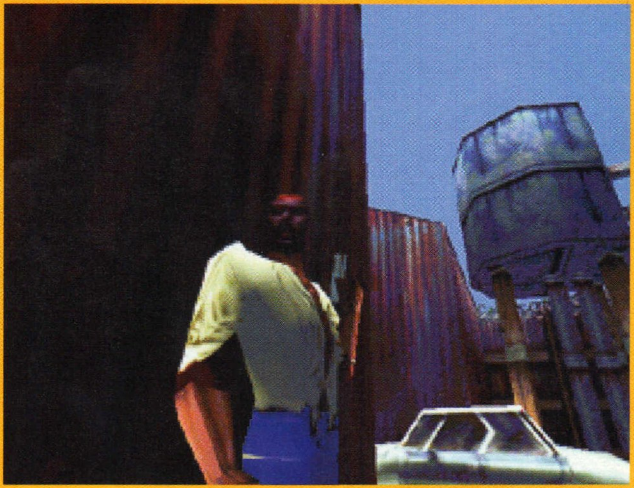
N64: But, it's definitely on now, then?
It's definitely on. It's about as on as you can get. Very on. Right on, if you like.

N64: What stage are you at?
We're a little way behind the PC version, but we've got some incredibly talented people working on the N64 game and I've no doubt they'll be catching up really soon.

N64: Can you tell us about some of the stuff to look forward to?
Yeah. You can walk in and out of houses, and you can see to the horizon with no need for fog. Also, Shadowman is ambidextrous, in that he can hold a different weapon in each hand and fire both at the same time. We're also planning on Shadowman being able to get into and drive a vehicle of some kind, in one sequence of the game. The list of great bits is endless...

N64: That sounds just fine. But, the most crucial question is, will it have loads of blood in it?
Yes, it will have. And it'll be red. And if you get close enough to the screen, you might actually be able to see the corpuscles in it...

N64: What sort of release date for Shadowman are you looking at?
This year, hopefully.



GO! GO!

Rok hard

FIRST PICS!

TUROK 2

ACCLAIM	96M	TBA	SUMMER (US)	SUMMER (UK)

Oooh, everything's just that little bit tougher now. With *GoldenEye* about as good as *gaming* gets (let alone first-person shoot-'em-ups), Iguana US have quite a task on their hands trying to re-establish the virtues of their comic book Indian. But, things have changed a bit.

Firstly, *Turok 2* places less emphasis on the often frustrating jumping of its predecessor, and more on gun-firing and exploration. It's not likely to blot out this feature altogether (even though Rare's game and *Doom* have managed quite happily without it), but there was some criticism, especially in the Lost Land level, of the precision jumping required. (Which was made even harder by the fact that it was first-person jumping.)

Additionally, there's been a concerted effort to chip away at the close quarters fogging, especially as *GoldenEye* proved that the N64 was perfectly capable of misting things up well into the distance. *And* bigger weapons and more varied dinosaurs (including, we hope, the Diplodocus that was taken out at the last minute in *Turok*) are also promised, including different sizes of Leapers, those scary bug-things that jump at you in the cavern sections.

And, lastly, there's also an impressive new compression routine being used in the game that frees up 40% more space in the cart for extra stuff, like, we hope, the multiplayer mode that's still yet to be confirmed. Regardless, though, this is still a massively anticipated game and its planned release date in August simply can't come soon enough for us. In the meantime, enjoy these new shots...

◁ Turok 2 promises a wider variety of dinosaurs...

△ ...and less mist. These shots look very promising indeed.

GO! GO!

Eager waiting: bring out your dead

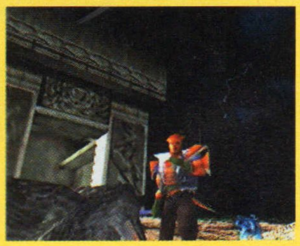
Forsaken

Another game coming to fruition at Iguana UK, *Forsaken* promises to be not only a rattlingly fast, supremely violent *Tunnel B1*-u-like, but a vastly different adventure to the impressive PC version and the (slightly less impressive) PlayStation outing.

Basically, you take control of a scavenger – a bike-riding, no-faced psycho – who searches a holocaustic Earth in the hope of finding some expensive remains with which to trade and earn some back-handed cash. Your task is made more difficult by numerous other killer mercenaries, with exactly the same idea, and lethal locations where gun turrets and bombs reign supreme, and are set up to destruct any time anyone enters the levels.

Where *Forsaken* on the N64's really likely to succeed, though, is in its clever artificial intelligence, which changes according to how quickly you settle into the game, essentially meaning that better players *always* take a different route to, er, less better players and even medium-skilled players. All very interesting – if it works out...

Castlevania 64



Still under a dark cloud of secrecy at Konami's Japanese HQ, *Castlevania 64* is, nevertheless, one of the most anticipated third-party updates of them all and a rollickingly good example of how to 'do' scaryness without splattering blood all over the gaff. For a full-size look, take a gander at page 6 of this very issue.

Duke Nukem: Time to Kill

The old Dukester doesn't command quite the same level of respect as the titles above (mainly because he's a repulsive, Americanised no-brainer, with the worst pay-off lines in the world), but his third-person outing, now confirmed as being in development at UK conversion specialists, Eurocom, has to go down as a prime example of future 'adult'-style N64 ents.

As the sub-title suggests, as well as gunning down anything that moves (or, unfortunately for them, doesn't) Nukesy gets to travel through time, picking off any number of multi-national nasties and getting kitted up in – shock! – something other than his dirty maroon vest and blue trousers. A nice pair of moccasins and a short, back and sides? Hmm, possibly not. The bad news? This is coming out on the PC first. *Hexen 64*, we most certainly hope, it *won't* be.

Hybrid Heaven

Extra-terrestrial goop is the order of the day (or is it?) in Konami's awesomely awaited action RPG (or is it?). Much has been said, little has been confirmed, but the story – direct from premise specialists, Rent-a-Story – concerns alien experiments, alien invasions and alien killing (or does it?). Will it be a straight-down-the-line RPG or an adventure with talky bits in it? Will it feature a fair sprinkling of blood, or will things take a more Nintendo-friendly not-too-violent-but-you-know-there's-a-little-bit-of-killing-in-there approach? Ah, well, that's the waiting game you play with dark *Hybrid Heaven*. *Veeery* mysterious. (Or is it?)

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F64(4)

RPG NEWS

WITH WIL OVERTON

Only weeks to go now

Zelda overload!

NEW PICS!

UPDATE!

LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE OCARINA OF TIME

NINTENDO	256M	1	April	TBA

We've featured *Zelda* so many times in RPG news you could forgive us for wanting to rename the page The Hyrule Herald.

And why not. Every time a new package of shots arrives from Kyoto they've never failed to amaze. From the first shots of Link's horse, to the time travelling old Link/young Link revelation, it's no wonder *Zelda*'s topped the N64 most wanted lists all over the world ever since it was announced.

With the 256Mbit cart now in the thorough hands of the Super Mario Club (NCL's in-house games testing department) the likelihood that *Ocarina Of Time* will still make its April release slot in Japan seems ever more certain.

So join us now for possibly the last look at *Zelda*, until the moment we thought would never happen.

Oi you – outside!

Just when you thought little Link was going to be a bit of wuss, here come a load of shots showing just how nifty he really is with the Dekuno Bou (that's a big stick to you and me).

As we've seen before, Navi – Link's guardian fairy – warns of the impending danger from a Tekitie ambush and the screen closes in, indicating combat. The red diamond is the attack target, no matter what weapon Link's equipped with, (selected with the C button – remember) and shows just where you're aiming.

Temple trample

Unicorns, triforces and glitter (like won't have seen since The Hitman and Her finished on TV) adorn Zelda's latest location.

Charlie Drake

Of course, in Link's case his boomerang definitely will come back. Here's how he uses it.

Enter the room.

Take aim.

Let it go.

Watch as it spins into the distance.

Here it comes back.

Good catch!

Now, what did I hit again?

Oi you – inside!

There are just as many enemies inside the many dungeons that Link explores, as there are in the open air. But, in the best tradition of Nintendo, each has an achilles heel to exploit. In the case of the chess-piece-like Armos Knights seen here, it's a tell-tale crack in their stone backs.

△ Young Link uses the slingshot to fend off an Armos Knight. The screen zooms in to a first-person view to help aiming.

△ No, look behiiiiiiiind yooooou!

Another blast from the past is Link's patented spin slash. Charge up your sword and let loose with a devastating spinning lunge. Here he unleashes on an unsuspecting Armos Knight. ▷

A stroll in the village

There may not be much action, but these shots of Link running through what we suppose is Hyrule, are probably the most astonishing here. The level of detail in the town's streets is nothing short of astonishing.

△ Link legs it down a back alley, with Navi following fast behind. You only have to look at the trees (always tough to do in 3D) to appreciate the level of detail here.

▽ For sale: Quaint cottage-style semi-detached in desirable locale. In need of some modernisation. Would suit time travelling couple hosting small ocarina recitals.

SORRY

In order to get in all these great new Zelda pics, the old codge... er FuSoYa has taken a break this month. But he'll be back to his cantankerous old self next issue, with some great RPG news!

GO! GO! ▷

Cup land

NEW INFO!

It might be good, but how will EA's game fare without that all-important licence?

WORLD CUP '98

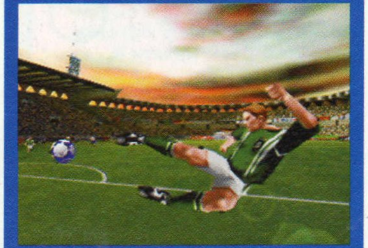
EA	64M	1-4	(UK) May

It's not often that EA get beaten to a licence but, with their tournament tie-in *World Cup '98*, they've been booted into touch by... well, that one's a bit of a mystery too. Probably a PlayStation developer. But anyway, May sees the unlikely emergence of an EA football game without – that's *without* – a licence. Cue chuckles from the Konami camp.

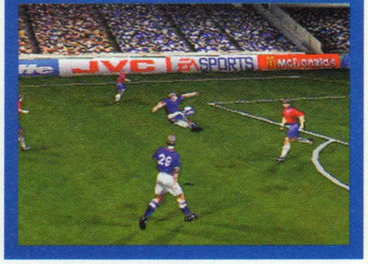
But, unperturbed, *World Cup '98* has ensured, even if it doesn't have the licence, that it chips in with some fabulous star names. The list of commentators now extends to John Motson, Andy Gray, Des Lynam, Gary Lineker, Chris Waddle and Kenneth Wolstenhome (the latter of whom provides some "They think it's all over"-style voiceage in the classic match options, where you can take charge of the 1966 England team – though presumably not in an effort to change things – and also alter the history of sundry other World Cup finals, including 1970).

Of course, the reason *FIFA* sells so well is largely down to the fact that it has a licence, so how will it fare without it? And, can it hope to come up to this year's *ISS* follow-up? Hmm. A question we'll be able to answer in a few months time...

Quality ball play – looks like a storm's brewing though.



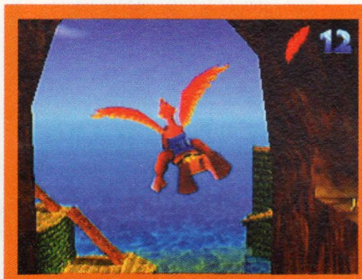
And his legs just disappeared beneath him – quite literally.



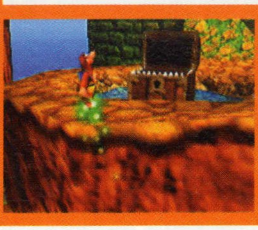
Bearing up

BANJO-KAZOOIE

NINTENDO	96M	1	(Japan) APRIL	(UK) JULY



Top flying action – possibly around the new level select bit.



No longer just a case of running around and collecting things, each world has a specific task.

Some more, impressive pics of Rare's stonking 3D bear-fest, but the most interesting news, from the company's Twycross HQ, has to be that the game will feature a level select, rather like *Diddy Kong Racing*'s.

FIRST PICS!

Basically, Banjo (and Kazooie) will start their adventures in a world similar to *DKR*'s Adventure Island, where they'll have to find the entrances to the five different worlds that go to make up the main game. Similarly, you'll only be able to enter certain worlds when you've collected enough musical notes and puzzle pieces.

But, but, but! Another major change comes in the shape of your level objectives.

Speaking to Rare, **N64** found out that it's no longer merely a question of running about and collecting things, there's "something else" that players are required to do on each level. Trying to squeeze anything further out of the notoriously tight-lipped development house, though, was like trying to get enthusiastic about Timber the Tiger's eyes. However, we might just have a first, proper playtest next month. We're currently studying blueprints of the Rare buildings...

Eddie ready

TONIC TROUBLE

UBISOFT	64M	1	(UK) JULY	(US) JULY

News filters through to us from Ubisoft HQ that their highly anticipated 3D platformer is in the final stages of completion. Boasting technology that should allow its cast of strange characters to react realistically to gamers' behaviour, *Tonic Trouble*'s action will be spread over ten different worlds.

Lead character Ed (who shares his limbless design with another Ubisoft favourite, Rayman) is an alien who's accidentally sparked off an environmental disaster here on earth. To make amends, he's dropped by to try and clean things up – a mission which consists, mainly, of trying to steal back the poison from Grogh the Hellish. It's the least he can do, really.

Screenshots have been a bit thin on the ground, but next issue should hopefully see a more thorough examination of what looks like being one of the N64's strangest games yet.

It's weird this – that's for sure.

No-body-Ed, chatting with someone. We think.

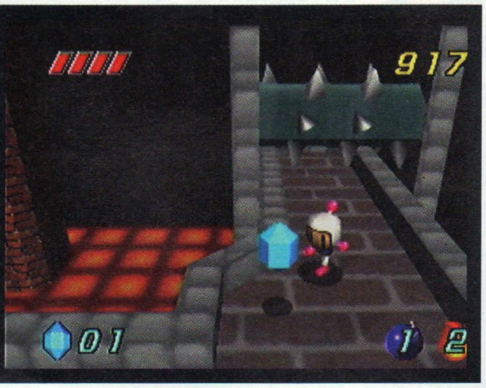
Super hero

BOMBERMAN HERO QUEEN MILIAN'S RESCUE

HUDSON	64M	1-4	SPRING (Japan)	TBA (UK)

EXCLUSIVE!

Real-time lighting and better bomb explosions are promised...



...along with more constructive use of the camera.

The big news from Hudson is that they're well into development on a follow-up to *Bomberman 64*, intent on putting right all that was wrong with the original. A tall task, you might think. And you'd be right.

But, *Bomberman Hero* has already undergone some significant changes. Although the last game bore some resemblance to a 3D platformer (well, it was 3D and it had some high bits in it), this sequel is expected to be more like *Mario*, pitching the camera closer to the action and throwing in more of an adventure element, where Bomberman has to collect various mechanical parts in order to create a machine to rescue Queen Milian. Apparently.

Bomberman will now be able to snowboard and morph into a submarine and a rocket and the levels are no longer as linear, with all four worlds providing at least two paths to completion (which hopefully adds a bit of replay value as well). At the end of each world there's a boss to scrap and they'll also be some lightweight RPG elements thrown in for good measure, including non-playable characters who give you clues on where to go.

The only foreseeable problem could come in the fact that *Hero* keeps the first game's engine. It doesn't appear to have made any significant changes to what's going on as Bomberman is running about the levels, which leaves proceedings still feeling a bit pedestrian.

Additionally, the multiplayer mode appears to have had little extra work put into it, although the arenas are changing, which was a major problem with the first game.

Still, there's been some graphical changes (real-time lighting and better bomb explosions, for example) and the camera is definitely being used more constructively. Quite whether that'll prove enough to convince the doubters is another matter altogether. Either way, we'll have a proper look in a few months time.

Snap happy

POCKET MONSTERS SNAP

NINTENDO	64DD	1	JUNE (Japan)	TBA (UK)

Pocket Monsters Snap*, where you wander about some rather happy 3D environments taking pictures of odd looking animals, is still on schedule for June and the final, this-is-actually-it (no, really) release of the 64DD.

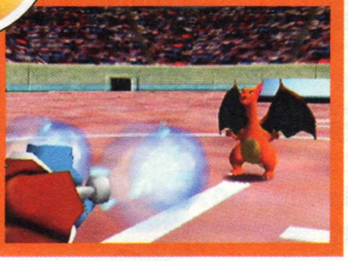
These two lonely screenshots are all that have appeared from Nintendo since Space World but they suggest it could be quite an, erm, *interesting* experience. So, what's the purpose of the game? To encourage players to become animal-loving photographers, à la David Bailey? To get a bit of exercise in your local, virtual park? To get to know all the animals in Nintendo's vastly imaginative kingdom? Mmm, well a bit of all of them. Probably.

The main point of interest will be that *Pocket Monsters Snap* allows you to use the 64DD's much-mooted writability, in order to create your own photo albums. But, how exactly all this ties in and just whether it'll be any *fun* is still the big question on everybody's lips. Except, of course, Nintendo who are certain it'll be wonderful.

NEW PICS!

A perfect picture to add to your photo album collection.

And yes, here's another one of the ugly critters. Smile please.



An ear to the ground

What exactly's been going down on the N64 scene over the past 30 days...

After we revealed, last issue, Norwegian developers Innerloop had two N64 titles on the way this Christmas, Eidos confirmed to N64 that neither game would be a flight sim. Instead, the first will be an extreme sports title (incorporating snowboarding, flying and "a big twist") and the second a 3D adventure. Interesting, indeed.

ISS2 (there's still no word on what it'll be called officially) should be available the issue after next. But, until then, here's a taste of what to expect: 48 teams, twice as many tactical strategies, improved animation, a slightly tweaked control system including extra passing options and a series of new viewpoints. And with Tony 'Hubba' Gubba at the helm, it looks like being a rosy summer for the football game we *all* want to get our hands on.

Unreal, a surprising PC departure for GT in the shape of a – yes! – first-person shoot-'em-up, is coming to the N64 at Christmas. Early versions look promising and with **Quake** on the N64 likely to disappoint, after **Turok 2**, it could spell the only real competition for Rare's all-conquering *GoldenEye*.

Talking of Rare, N64 discovered this month that they're working on a total of eight projects, four of which – **Banjo-Kazooie**, **Conker's Quest**, **Ultra Donkey Kong** and **GoldenEye Engine Game** – we know about. The rest? Well, the development team behind *Diddy Kong Racing* are busy beavering away on another game. Asked whether it would be a racing game, Rare said: "Oooooh, no. It's something completely and utterly different". Perhaps that fighting game rumour isn't so flimsy after all...

This month, Ocean confirmed a further three titles coming for the N64 in 1998. **Sim City 2000** in English, **Puma Street Soccer** from Sunsoft (a six-a-side football-fest, endorsed by Diego Maradona) plus another Looney Toons game (on top of the 3D platformer, with Taz as the main character). This one, though, is a racing game. A rival to *DKR* and *Mario Kart 64*? We'll have to see. As it is, none of the three have specific release dates yet.

PLANET 64 INFORMATION station

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NEW!

Top 10 Official UK N64 chart

1 GoldenEye 007
Rare/Nintendo — Released: 11/97
Last month's chart position – 13 — N64 Issue 9 94%

NEW!

2 Nagano Winter Olympics
Konami — Released: 02/98
New entry — N64 Issue 12 32%

3 Diddy Kong Racing
Rare/Nintendo — Released: 12/97
Last month's chart position – 1 — N64 Issue 10 90%

4 FIFA Road to the World Cup '98
EA Sports — Released: 12/97
Last month's chart position – 2 — N64 Issue 10 83%

5 Super Mario 64
Nintendo — Released: 03/97
Last month's chart position – 3 — N64 Issue 1 96%

6 Mario Kart 64
Nintendo — Released: 06/97
Last month's chart position – 4 — N64 Issue 4 91%

7 Turok Dinosaur Hunter
Acclaim — Released: 03/97
Last month's chart position – 9 — N64 Issue 1 91%

8 Lylat Wars
Nintendo — Released: 09/97
Last month's chart position – 5 — N64 Issue 8 90%

9 ISS64
Konami — Released: 06/97
Last month's chart position – 7 — N64 Issue 3 92%

10 Extreme G
Acclaim — Released: 11/97
Last month's chart position – 11 — N64 Issue 9 87%

Top 5 Import chart

Source: Project K

1 1080° Snowboarding
Nintendo • SPT — N64 Issue 14 – TBA

2 Snobow Kids
Atlus • RAC — N64 Issue 14 – 88%

3 Mario Kart 64
Nintendo • RAC — N64 Issue 4 – 91%

4 NBA In the Zone
Konami • SPT — N64 Issue 14 – 71%

5 Art of Fighting Twin
Culture Brain • FGT — N64 Issue 12 – 78%

N64 5 Most played

1 Goemon
Konami — ACT/RPG
N64 Issue 14 90%

2 Snowboard Kids
Atlus — RAC
N64 Issue 14 86%

3 Fighters Destiny
Ocean — FGT
N64 Issue 13 86%

4 1080° Snowboarding
Nintendo — SPT
N64 Issue 14 TBA

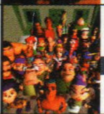
5 GoldenEye 007
Rare/Nintendo — ACT/SHT
N64 Issue 9 94%

N64 5 Most wanted

Legend of Zelda
Nintendo — ACT/RPG
Japan: April
UK: 4th Quarter '98

ISS Pro '98
Konami — SPT
Japan: June
UK: June

Banjo-Kazooie
Nintendo — ACT
Japan: April
UK: June



Mother 3
Nintendo — RPG
Japan: TBA
UK: TBA

Super Mario RPG 2
Nintendo/HAL — RPG
Japan: December
UK: Never

Readers 5 Most played

1 ?????
Developer — Game type
N64 Issue no. score%

2 ?????
Developer — Game type
N64 Issue no. score%

3 ?????
Developer
N64 Issue no...

4 ??...
...Game type
...s. score%

5 ...???
Developer — Game type
N64 Issue no. score%

Readers 5 Most wanted

? ?????
Developer
Japan: Rele...
UK: Rele...

? ...
Game type
...ase Date
...ase Date

? ?????
Developer — Game type
Japan: Release Date
UK: Release Date

? ?????
Developer — Game type
Japan: Release Date
UK: Release Date

? ?????
Developer — Game type
Japan: Release Date
UK: Release Date

SEND IN YOUR VOTES NOW!

ULTRA RELEASE LIST

The latest information on every Nintendo 64 game currently in development world-wide, updated monthly.

NEW! Now with easy to spot UK release dates. Just look for the titles in a dark blue bar!

Game name	Publisher	Type	Country
March 1998			
30 1080° Snowboarding	Nintendo	SPT	US
Pro Baseball King 2	Imagineer	SPT	JPN
Bio Tetris	Bottom Up	ETC	JPN
Kiratto Kaigetsu	Imagineer	TAB	JPN
Quake 64	GT	SHT	US/UK
Snow Speeder	Imagineer	SPT	JPN
Super Robot Spirits	Banpresto	FGT	JPN
Twisted Edge Snowboarding	Kemco	SPT	US
NBA Pro '98	Konami	SPT	JPN
Jeopardy!	Gametek	PUZ	US
April			
Pachinko: 365 Days	Seta	ETC	JPN
Legend of Zelda Ocarina of Time	Nintendo	RPG	JPN
Mystical Ninja 64	Konami	RPG	UK
Banjo-Kazooie	Nintendo	ACT	JPN
Snowboard Kids	THE Games	ACT	UK
May			
Sim City 2000	Ocean	SLG	UK
Rev Limit	Seta	RAC	JPN
June			
F-Zero X	Nintendo	RAC	JPN
Pocket Monsters 64DD	Nintendo	RPG	JPN
Talent Maker 64DD	Nintendo	ETC	JPN
Polygon Maker 64DD	Nintendo	ETC	JPN
Picture Maker 64DD	Nintendo	ETC	JPN
Conker's Quest	Nintendo	ACT	JPN/US
World Cup '98	EA	SPT	US/UK
G.A.S.P! Fighters' NEXTream	Konami	FGT	JPN
ISS Pro '98	Konami	SPT	UK
UEFA Soccer	Ocean	SPT	UK
Silicon Valley	BMG	ACT	US/UK
Wrecking Balls	Acclaim	PUZ	US/UK
Ken Griffey Baseball (Yes!)	Nintendo	SPT	US
July			
NBA Courtside	Nintendo	SPT	JPN
Forsaken	Acclaim	ACT	US/UK
Tonic Trouble	Ubi Soft	ACT	UK/US
Banjo-Kazooie	Nintendo	ACT	UK

Game name	Publisher	Type	Country
1998			
early Centipede X	Midway	SHT	US
spr. Jungle Emperor Leo	Nintendo	–	JPN
spr. Mission: Impossible	Ocean	ACT	US/UK
spr. Robotech	Gametek	ACT	US/UK
spr. Cruis'n World	Midway	RAC	US
sum. Body Harvest	Nintendo	SHT	US
sept. F-Zero X	Nintendo	RAC	UK
aut. Rampage World Tour	GT	ACT	US/UK
aut. UEFA Soccer	Ocean	SPT	UK
spr. Robotech	Gametek	ACT	US/UK
nov. Legend of Zelda Ocarina of time	Nintendo	RPG	UK
wint. Unreal	GT	ACT	US
Acclaim Sports Soccer	Acclaim	SPT	US/UK
Art of Fighting Twin	Ocean	FGT	UK
Attack!	Midway	–	US
Buck Bumble	UbiSoft	ACT	US/UK
Earthworm Jim 3D	Interplay	ACT	US/UK
Extreme G 2	Acclaim	RAC	US/UK
Flights of the UN	Video Sys.	SHT	JPN
Golf	Nintendo	SPT	JPN
Grand Prix Race	Video Sys.	RAC	JPN
Hybrid Heaven	Konami	ACT	JPN
Jungle Emperor Leo	Nintendo	ACT	JPN
Kirby's Air Ride	Nintendo	RAC	ALL
Mortal Kombat 4	Midway	FGT	US/UK
NBA Jam 98	Acclaim	SPT	US
Pikachu Genki Dechu	Nintendo	ETC	JPN
Powerslide	Emergent	RAC	US
Quest 64	THQ	RPG	US
Quest for Camelot	Titus	–	US
RoboTech: Crystal Dreams	Gametek	SHT	US
Sim City 2000	Imagineer	SLG	JPN
Sim Copter	Maxis	SIM	US
Space Circus	Ocean	ACT	US/UK
Spooky	ICE	ACT	US/UK
Thornado	Factor 5	SHT	US
Turok 2	Acclaim	SHT	US/UK
Ultra Donkey Kong	Nintendo	ACT	JAP
V-Rally 64	Ocean	RAC	UK
No release date yet			
7th Legion	DMA/Epic	–	US

Game name	Publisher	Type	Country
Bond Engine Game*	Rare	SHT	US/UK
Buggy Boogie	Nintendo	RAC	JPN
Cavalry Battle 3000	JSS	RAC	JPN
Daikatana	Ion Storm	SHT	US
Dracula 3D (Castlevania 64)	Konami	ACT	ALL
F-Zero X (add-on disk)	Nintendo	RAC	JPN
FIFA '99	EA	SPT	UK
Freak Boy	Virgin	ACT	US
GEX: Enter the Gecko	Midway	ACT	US/UK
Ghouls and Ghosts 64	Capcom	ACT	JPN
Ikazuchi no Goto Ku	Seta	TAB	JPN
Jack and the Beanstalk	Nintendo	–	ALL
Joust X	Midway	SHT	US
Jikkyo Golf Tournament 98	Konami	SPT	JPN
Kindaichi's Accident File	Hudson	–	JPN
Knife Edge	Kemco	SHT	US
Legion X	Hudson	–	JPN
Loderunner 64	Bandai	ACT	JPN
Mother 3	Nintendo	RPG	JPN
Paperboy 64	Mindscape	–	US/UK
Puzzle Game*	Capcom	PUZ	JPN
Reason	Imagineer	–	JPN
Rugrats	T•HQ	ACT	US
Sim City 64DD	Nintendo	SLG	JPN
Space Jelly	Soft. Creat.	ACT	UK
Street Fighter 64*	Capcom	FGT	JPN
Super Mario 64 2	Nintendo	ACT	ALL
Super Mario RPG 2	Nintendo	RPG	ALL
Top Gear Rally 2	Kemco	RAC	ALL
Top Gear Rally 64DD	Kemco	RAC	ALL
VR Baseball	Interplay	SPT	—
Wetrix	Ocean	PUZ	—

*working title only

KEY

ACT	ACTION	RPG	ROLE PLAYING GAME
FGT	FIGHTING GAME	SPT	SPORT
SLG	STRATEGY	TAB	BOARD GAME
SHT	SHOOT-'EM-UP	SIM	SIMULATION
RAC	RACING	ETC	MISCELLANEOUS

cut and send

VOTE!

PLANET 64 INFORMATION station

Top 5 vote n' draw

There's only one way we can keep track of the games you're playing and what you want to play – and that's if you tell us!
All we need are your five most played games of the past month, along with the five N64 titles you're most looking forward to.

And as if you needed any more encouragement, each month we'll be putting all the Information Station voting slips into a big hat and awarding a spanking new N64 game to the first one drawn. Tell us which one you'd like on the slip.

My five most played games are:	*My five most wanted games are:*

Name

Address

Post Code

Game wanted

日本製

Nintendo Japan release new mag

Launched around the end of December, Nintendo Power hit the ground running with shots of the actual box the 64DD will come in. Not the machine, you understand, 'cause that would be naff and totally old hat, but the box. An original slant on the plethora of 64DD-related stories, I suppose.

Focusing on features, news and interviews with developers, the monthly mag made its debut with a price tag of ¥390 and Yoshi's adorable little face adorning the front cover. Taking a leaf out of N64 Dream's book, it also included two full pages of stickers for your cartridges and, just to make sure everyone understood that they haven't forsaken the SNES just yet, one page of those stickers were intended for SF memory cassettes. These are, in case you've missed it, the blank carts you can take into your local convenience store and use to download the SNES games of your choice.

Continuing with the originality theme, the first issue, which less imaginative publishers might call issue 1, say, was instead proudly emblazoned with the legend 'VOLUME 0'. Of course.

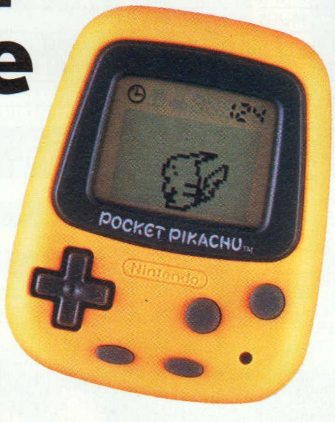
Never mind the machine, let's just look at the box.

Pikachu gets his own machine

The games press in Japan have been spending a lot of time covering Yamauchi-san's vision for the future, with extensive features trumpeting the expandability of the N64. Much of this has centred, of course, on the *Pocket Monster* games which are scheduled for simultaneous release with the 64DD unit and, inevitably – tiresomely – on Pikachu. So much so, in fact, that the latest Nintendo product is 'Pocket Pikachu'. Looking like a rounded-off Game Boy, Pocket Pikachu is the first in what is certain to be a very long line of 'communication games', emphasising constructive, nurturing gameplay over more conventional gaming elements.

Designed, according to the Nintendo marketing blurb, to be 'worn on the belt by boys and as a pendant by girls', the idea is that as you walk, Pikachu 'follows' you, moving around on the screen and growing up with you. Altogether now, aaaaahhh. You feed him on electricity, measured in Watts, which you garner by playing a type of slot machine game on screen, or simply by walking around with him. Watts, we are told, make Pikachu happy and bring the two of you closer together.

Released on March 27 and relieving you of ¥2,500, this overgrown Tamagotchi is the future of gaming. Possibly.



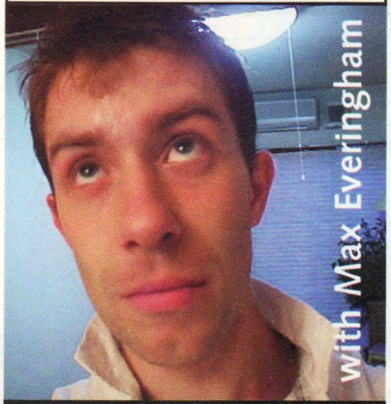
The future is... yellow and hangs round your neck!? If you're a girl that is.

Mother 3

Creatures, the team behind the second-most eagerly-anticipated N64 RPG, have announced that they've been working on an innovative new combat system. Head honcho Ito-san said recently that the system, on test since last year, was given a trial run when the team all showed up at the home of Shigesato Itoi, a renowned Japanese movie director.

After playing *Mother 2* on his Game Boy, Itoi, decided he wanted to make his own game and this reached the Creatures team (via Iwata-san). Anyhow, the boys get together and give the 'revolutionary sound battle system' a go. Itoi was so enthused, he said "I told them 'Don't just sit there! Go out and sell it!'" Praise indeed.

Itoi's game ideas, by the way, will be realised later this year in the N64 title '*Cabbage*', another 'nurturing game' in line with Yamauchi's Space World speech.



MADE IN JAPAN

Last month skiing, this month golf – you'd be forgiven for thinking Max had no time for computer games. But rest assured, there's only one man we trust to bring us the latest news from Japan and that's the esteemed Mr. Everingham.

Hongo-san speaks

Quizzed recently on the latest delay for the 64DD's release, Hongo-san, head of PR at Nintendo HQ, Kyoto replies:

"The hardware is ready now. But we're waiting so we can release *Sim City* and *Pocket Monster Stadium* at the same time – possibly *Mother 3* too. A March release is extremely unlikely." Pushed to reveal the pricing, he asserts "No, we won't be able to say anything definite until April." The 64 Dream staff, however, are betting on a June 23rd release and a cost somewhere between 9,800 and 12,800 yen. Brave men, indeed.

Now the biggest game show in Japan, the twice-yearly Tokyo Game show attracted 120,000 visitors and 104 exhibitors last fall. Nintendo have previously suggested that they may attend the event, but Hongo-san is saying otherwise this month:

"There's a problem with the timing of the Tokyo show, and we want to focus on just the two big events, our big national festival, Nintendo Space World, and E3 in the States. We realise the importance of the Tokyo Game Show, but we just can't gear up in time, since it comes so closely on the heels of our own event (Space World) in November."

Game Boy gizmo

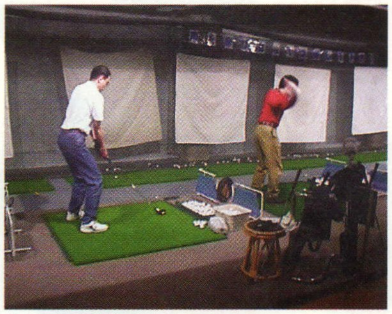
The Pocket Camera, as seen in James' Space World report a few issues back, has been launched in Japan with the help of a TV advertising campaign. Cashing in on the continuing fascination with 'Pri-Kla' machines, the eyeball-on-a-credit-card will be a must-buy for anyone who is anyone. Or should that be 'anyone who is nobody'? For a closer look at Nintendo's new baby, turn to page 64.

AN ENGLISHMAN IN TOKYO

Lets play golf happy together

Golf in Japan is not quite the outdoor sport you'd expect.

Someone has been paying attention. With '*Minna no golf*' (Golf for Everyone) topping the PlayStation charts for several months late last year, it was just a matter of time before one of the Nintendo gang cottoned on. Enter T&E Soft, with their evocative '*Masters '98*' golfing delight.



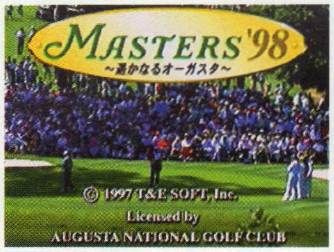
◁ *It's not quite St. Andrews but they don't seem to mind...*

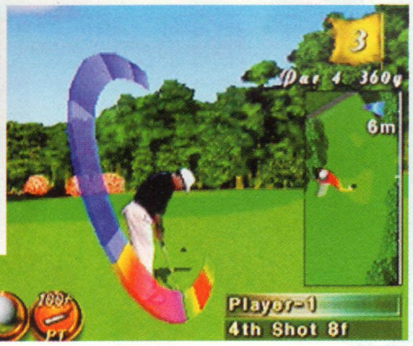
Considering that golf doesn't get much more complicated than hitting a small ball a long way ahead of you, then walking after it, it's surprising how many developers have made a hash of recreating this exalted pastime. Golf is, you see, something of an obsession for millions and millions of Japanese. Not that it's really golf as we know it – the extreme lack of space in this country means that for the vast majority of golf fans, playing on an actual, real-life golf course is no more than a fantasy. Then there's the cost: you're looking at selling the family silver, home, car, Gunners season-ticket and possibly one or more of the kids to meet the bill for the annual club membership.

To compensate for this dispiriting paucity, every major population centre is littered with driving ranges and practice nets. These are more often than not perched atop high buildings and afford a very odd sight – for a long while after arriving here I thought Japan was a nation of pigeon fanciers or budgie breeders or something. I know plenty of people here who buy a very expensive set of top-flight clubs, deck themselves out in the swishest designer-label golf clothes, load up their 4x4 RV with themselves and their kit, then drive a mile or so down the road to their local health club to practice all day in a basement practice net, not much bigger than their own living rooms.

Naturally, some people do manage to get out to real golf courses and I also recently had this privilege. The most fascinating aspect of the day was the number of golfers who, and I'm being kind here, were complete and utter hackers. More than once, we stood waiting at the tee while the athlete in front, who clearly possessed the manual dexterity of a water buffalo, would carefully tee-up, take a few deeply impressive practice swings, then launch himself wildly at the unsuspecting ball with an action resembling someone drowning on the High Seas during a force-nine gale. After expending this monumental effort, they would strain forward, squinting toward the green whilst, about 6 yards away, at an angle approximately perpendicular to their line of sight, their recently abused golf ball was skipping to a well-deserved rest.

Happily, *Masters '98* will fill the gap in Japanese golf fans' lives with its fluid motion-captured players, delightful sound effects and lush greenery. They may not get to savour the fresh air experiences usually associated with the real game, but hey, it's as close as they're going to get. Ⓝ





...And if you're lazy then p'raps this is the answer. See the review on page 62. ▷

LEARN JAPANESE

PART 10

Golfing in Japan? Here're all the phrases you might need...

ゴ ル フ
gorufu = golf

練 習 す る
renshu o suru = practice

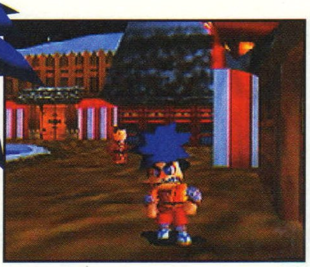
い い ショ ト
ii shoto! = 'good shot!'

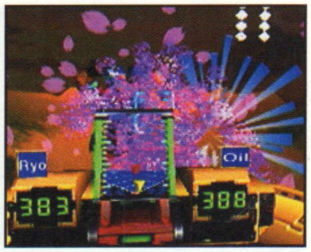
えっ グリーン に 乗った！
e?! Guriin ni notta = 'good lord! You're on the green!'

あれ！コースの業料は幾ら？
ARE! Kosunogyuryo u ikura? = 'the course fees are how much?!'

THE LATEST U.K. N64 GAMES REVIEWED, RATED... AND COMPLETED!

N64 MAGAZINE ARENA





MYSTICAL NINJA STARRING GOEMON

Odd, granted. But bundles of fun.

GO TO PAGE 32

N64 MAGAZINE ARENA

N64 MAGAZINE STAR GAME

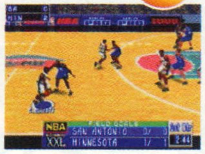
Guide to scoring

Because N64 cartridges are so expensive, we mark our reviews fiercely. If a game wins our Star Game award, you can be certain that it's an absolutely top-notch title and that we've tried our best to finish it before writing our review.

85% and above (N64 STAR GAME)	*Only after playing a game right through to the end will* **N64** *Magazine consider awarding it a Star Game badge. So you can be sure that only the N64 games that're really, genuinely worth buying get the highest scores.*
84% - 70%	*The best Nintendo 64 games really are superb, so many games that'd seem top-notch on other machines are eclipsed on the N64. But if we award a game 70%-plus you can be sure it's jolly good fun, and well worth thinking about adding to your collection.*
69% - 50%	*We hate giving games marks like this. Are they worth buying? Or not? But every so often there comes along a game that's perfectly playable and everything, but just isn't special in any way, and simply doesn't make good use of the N64.*
49% - 20%	*Here you'll find games that're lazily programmed or hurriedly cobbled together, or simply weren't a good idea in the first place.*
19% - 0%	*The disaster zone. There've been a couple and we've not shied away from telling the whole truth about them.*

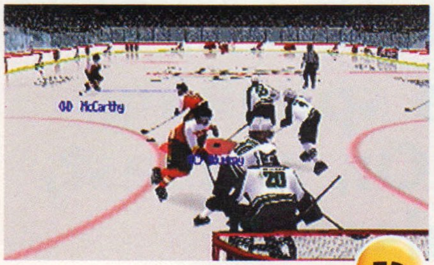
NBA PRO '98

Konami's second sports game. As great as *ISS64*? GO TO PAGE 42



NHL BREAKAWAY '98

From the people that brought you *Turok*...

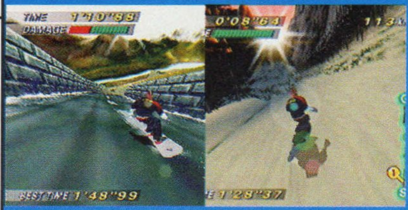


GO TO PAGE 52

IMPORT ARENA

The games they're playing in America and Japan.

1080° SNOWBOARDING



Quite a departure for Nintendo, and one of the most stylish N64 games yet. Gnarly!

GO TO PAGE 56

AUGUSTA MASTERS

Better than the *Glory of St. Andrews*, but there wasn't much in it.

GO TO PAGE 62

HOW IT WORKS

Team 64 are gaming experts – they've been knocking around the nether regions of electronic entertainment for donkey's years. They've been hand-picked according to their ability to: a) play games and finish the great ones, b) make definitive judgements and, c) write down their assessments in a clear and entertaining way.

What those categories mean

9 VISUALS

The N64 can produce gob-smacking graphics that are light years ahead of other consoles. Does the game in question reflect this?

9 SOUNDS

Are the tunes any good? Or are they best turned off? How about the sound effects? Atmospheric and useful? Or a bit embarrassing?

9 MASTERY

With the Nintendo 64 being so 'special', how well does the game make use of the incredible hardware at its disposal? Or would it work just as well on any other console?

9 LIFESPAN

At £60-plus a go, you'll want to get weeks of entertainment out of every N64 game you buy. That's why we finish the best ones to make sure they don't peter out prematurely.

VERDICT

The big score at the end is basically, in as scientific a fashion as possible, how much fun the game's going to give you. Look to the left to see how this works.

Team 64

This month, the Pocket Camera has allowed our reviewers to make the personal changes that they've always wanted.

James Ashton
"This handy bolt through my neck has allowed me to utilise the power from lightning" says James. "I'm finding being editor a bit of a draining experience."
Game of the month: 1080°

Paul Jarrold
An unfortunate reliance on British Rail has left Paul needing an alternative way of getting home of an evening, "I need to fly", he said.
Game of the month: 1080°

Wil Overton
"Considering my great age", mumbled Wil, "I think I'd make a very fine owl. Twit-twoo, twit-twoo." (Sound of strait-jacket being re-applied.)
Game of the month: Mystical Ninja

Jes Bickham
"I'm running out of ideas for new top ten hits for me and my group Aqua" Jes confessed. "I wish I could think up some more."
Game of the month: Fighters Destiny

Tim Weaver
Swearing boy Tim had no hesitation. "A mouth zip would help me stop swearing, especially when my controller pak wipes my Goemon game save position."
Game of the month: Mystical Ninja

Andrea Ball
Andrea decided she'd like collagen implants. In her lips. The results just go to prove that you shouldn't mess with Mother Nature.
Game of the month: Snowboard Kids

Also starring

James Price – Could've been Millhouse.
Dean Mortlock – Could've been Dr. Doak.
Dan Nowell – Could've been magic.

PREVIOUSLY IN N64 We reviewed the Japanese version of *Goemon* back in issue 7.

EXCLUSIVE!

Goemon's back! And now he's speaking English. Or, at least, a recognisable language of some sort or other...

MYSTICAL GOE

▽ The game features a number of inventive sub-games and puzzles – it's not just a case of wandering about, you know.

△ Goemon powers-up to push the switch and move to the next level.

△ The camera does swing around but, eventually, always ends up behind your character.

Green hair. Popular in old Japan. Yes. ▷

▽ Ebisumaru approaches the local branch of Spec Savers.

There was a bit of a problem with the Japanese *Mystical Ninja* – called, as you may remember, *Ganbare Goemon 5*. Pacing through it, about half way in (rather embarrassingly) we got completely stuck, our progress thwarted by the fact that this marriage of action, platforming adventure and RPG was relying fairly heftily on text, all of which was in Japanese.

Wil tried, our dictionary tried but – by gad! – we just couldn't figure out where, who or what we were supposed to be doing. And so, we laid it to rest. Which, fortunately enough, is where this just-about-translated English version comes in.

The good news? Everything, *everything* is in here. And that includes the two songs – the frankly-quite-disturbingly-odd intro and the equally bizarre Robot theme (more of which later) – which took up so much space in the original *Goemon* cart (and, ultimately, proved to be the reason this bundle of joy weighed in at a whopping 128Meg). Also, there's no borders or colour wash-out, with *Mystical Ninja* proving to be another PAL-conversion triumph for Konami.

And the bad news? Well, in truth, there really isn't much. And this is why...

GO! GO! ▷

NINJA starring MON

Mystical Ninja

KONAMI

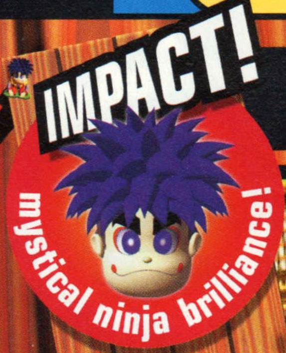
April	128M		1
	Controller Pak	Cartridge back-up	Rumble Pak

£60

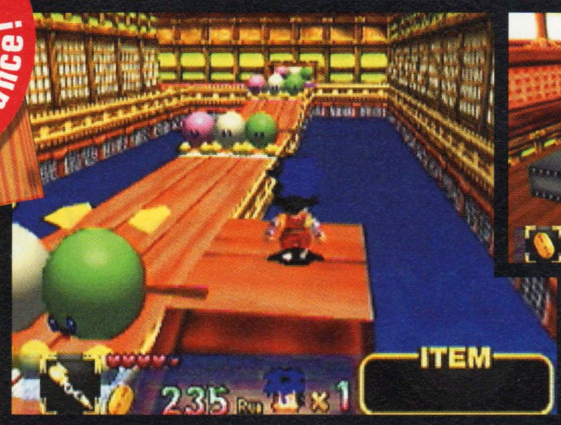
Goe! Goe! Troublemakers

In traditional RPG fashion, as Goemon progresses through his five-staged adventure, he picks up various waifs and strays, all of which possess their own, very unique (and very handy) little skills...

	Goemon	Ebisumaru
weapon 1	**PIPE** This is Goemon's standard weapon, holstered in his inventory from the start. Basically, the requirements are a push of the B button close to enemies. Be wary of two-hit enemies, mind, as successive hits with the pipe take longer than expected.	**SAW HAMMER** There're three different levels of Saw Hammer, attainable as you progress through the game. But the default hammer (ready and waiting in your inventory from the start) is actually more of a run-of-the-mill mallet, working in a similar fashion to Goemon's pipe, or Yae's Katana.
weapon 2	**CHAIN PIPE** The first, non-standard weapon in the game, Goemon can get to it in his very first venture outside of Oedo, up the mountain. This turns out to be especially useful later on when you start having to cross unjumpable gaps via the star boxes. Sound confusing? Don't worry, it'll all become clear.	**MEAT SAW HAMMER** This upgrade is a more powerful variant on the default weapon and is situated through the right hand door of the bouncy-platformed room, in the Festival Temple Castle. Every time you defeat an enemy with this you get a bonus dumpling which restores your energy.
weapon 3	**MEDAL** Standard inventory fodder for Goemon, these Medals are actually the coins you collect in the game. It's worth remembering that every time you re-enter a room, the coins will regenerate, even if you've already collected them. Sneaky, no?	**WIND-UP CAMERA** This handy invention allows Ebisumaru to make previously invisible things visible. So, by simply pressing the B button he can turn the ghosts in Ghost Toys Castle into big white sheets (and, with a quick change to his mallet, whack them into submission). And, fortunately, you obtain the camera from Ghost Toys Castle by playing a fantastic crane game which is fairly similar to those teddy bear crane games they have at beach fronts and amusement parks. Except, in Mystical Ninja's, you have to physically step on the forward/backward and left/right buttons. Top stuff.
weapon 4	**MEDAL OF FLAMES** Collected after walking the big plank-like body of the blue Dragon and killing the sub-Boss at the end. To use, simply hold down the B button, watch the magical sparkly bits twinkle around Goemon and then raise a smile as a golden glow shoots off, destroying anything worth destroying. Both are a little inaccurate, so are best used against stationary objects.	
magic	**SUDDEN IMPACT MAGIC** Sudden Impact Magic Power doubles Goemon's power-up allowing him to move objects that would normally prove too heavy. Be a bit careful when taking on enemies, though. With Sudden Impact on the go, he takes twice as much damage too.	**MINI-EBISU MAGIC** Mini-Ebisu Magic Power allows Ebisumaru to shrink in size, handily meaning he can pass through mouse-sized holes in the walls. This proves particularly necessary in Festival Temple Castle, hidden behind the closed doors of the Spa.



Oedo Castle



△ Ah, the old pulley and platform conundrum. Goemon surveys the scene.

After attaining Goemon's chain pipe from Mount Fuji (complete with slinky-style enemies), you have the vital tool to take on Oedo Castle, which has been transformed into an alien base by the Peach Mountain Shoguns. Your task is to save the Lord and Lady of the castle and, in return, they give you the key to the city, which allows you to progress onto the Impact section.

The actual castle is littered with star boxes and the point of these soon becomes clear. Get to the edge of one platform, press B, and watch the chain shoot across the tiny canyon, attaching to the star box across from you, and pulling you across the gap. (Fact 1: The star boxes in the Japanese version didn't actually feature stars at all but the Hindi symbols for peace which happen to be upside-down swastikas. Fascinating, no?)

weapon 1	**KATANA** The Katana is Yae's standard weapon, available from the moment she joins your party, at the beginning of stage two.	**KUNAI** A severe-looking souped-up razor blade, the Kunai can be upgraded three times during the course of the game (each upgrade rendering it more powerful). The first version is in your inventory from the very beginning and it only takes a couple of slices to ward of the attentions of most enemies.
weapon 2	**SWORD SHIELD** This cunning addition to the young lass's inventory allows her to protect herself from enemy attacks. She can't manoeuvre herself about when doing this but, by holding B, you can maintain a shield for as long as you choose. This becomes available a short time after the destruction of the third boss.	**KUNAI OF SEVERE COLD** An excellent addition to proceedings, the Cold Kunai enables you to freeze red hot moving platforms in the Festival Temple Castle. It can also be used generally to turn troublesome enemies into ice blocks. It becomes available to Sasuke on the high platforms above the bouncy pad room.
weapon 3	**YAE BAZOOKA** The perfect long distance weapon, the Bazooka costs a single ryo's worth of medals with every shot and by holding B you can even get an automatic lock-on to appear. This, though, costs an extra two ryo's. You'll find the Bazooka in the submarine section, about three-quarters of the way through the game.	**FIRE CRACKER BOMB** Costing one ryo every time it's used, the Fire Cracker Bomb allows you to destroy cracked stone doors, which occur around the edges of the Festival Temple area, and cannot be demolished with any other weapon. This comes as standard in Sasuke's extensive pockets.
weapon 4	**KORYUTA'S FLUTE** Not so much a weapon as a handy way of moving from place-to-place, the flute is given to you after you defeat the boss at the end of the blue dragon, Koryuta. Then, by simply getting Yae to play it, you can summon up the dragon again and travel to any location you've previously been to. Very handy later on.	**HAIR ATTACK** The perfect way to take out the strange paper-faced enemies in Festival Temple, by pressing B and Z, you can make Sasuke's hair shoot up on a white pole. The wonder of a toupé, eh?
magic	**MERMAID MAGIC** Mermaid Magic Power, which means Yae, in true Darryl Hannah fashion, can trade legs for fish tails and swim underwater. The process of using your flipper under the surface is easy: hit A repeatedly to swim and B to perform a dash attack.	**FLYING MAGIC** Flying Magic Power gives Sasuke the chance to leap (with the help of wings) to previously inaccessible places. Later on in the game, at the stage atop Mount Fuji, this becomes something of a necessity.

Oedo Castle is a fairly linear level – a cunning ploy to lull you into a sense of complacency – but, as with much of *Mystical Ninja*, you've got to go backwards to go forwards. If you see what we mean. This is particularly true of the keys in the castle, which often require you to explore side rooms, or track back along passages you've already traversed.

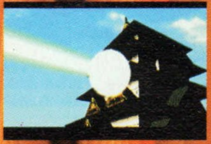
Boss!

Before you enter the Boss arena, make sure you pick up the cat and health. The Red Skeleton's attack patterns are fairly easy to master but that's not to say he's easy to kill. The best weapon to use is Goemon's chain pipe and the skeleton's weak spot is the red blob on his chin. He'll shoot fire out of his mouth and whilst doing this he's invincible, so wait before attacking. He'll flash if he's receiving damage. After about five or six hits, he adds a four-way laser to his repertoire and the only way you can avoid being hit is by leaping over them as they spin round.

△ Lush fire effects to rival those in Super Mario 64 itself. Goemon is a technical marvel.

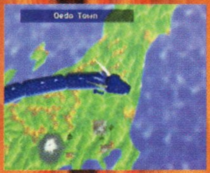
UM, WHY'S THAT THEN?

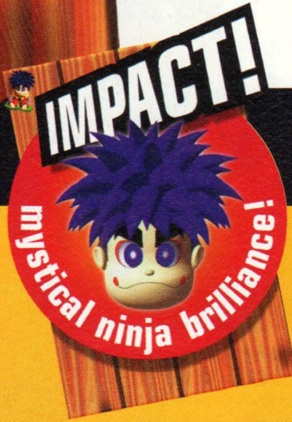
If we're all being honest, even the fact that the intro song is now translated won't aid you in the way of *Mystical Ninja*'s story. So, we will explain: in 16th Century Japan (that's the Edo period... apparently), a huge disc-like spaceship lands, destroying the landscape (soaking up an entire island during one point in the game) and kidnapping unsuspecting villagers. The reason? Well, the villagers are unsure. Ask around and they can only pin-point certain happenings. So, Goemon and Ebisumaru set off to discover what's 'going down'. And, to their utter horror, it turns out that the aliens are actually a group of cloak-wearing, make-up splattered oddities called the 'Peach Mountain Shoguns', who have come to Earth to steal the Great Stage Plan (not sure on that one) and produce the ultimate musical. Not everyday stuff then, but dastardly enough for Goemon and Ebisumaru to take on the challenge of saving the world.



GO! GO!

A BIT OF A DRAG
This, then, is where Koryuta comes in handy, whipping between places you've already been on the map. To call him up, all you have to do is have a quick *parp* on the old flute (via the green-haired gorgeousness of Yae) and you'll be given the chance to choose a location. Sadly, no matter how many times you use Koryuta, you can't skip his between-place animated sequence.





Goemon Impact!

... And, as if by magic, here he is. The role of Impact is a little bit bizarre and, for those uninitiated in the workings of the *Goemon* series, his appearance here is going to seem little more than an excuse for another utterly freakish song. But, him turning up at this pre-Boss juncture is actually quite predictable as, in all previous *Goemon* outings (since the second SNES game), he's done the same.

However, the magic of 64-bit allows for a far more impressive entrance and, to the accompaniment of the song ("I am the best, yes, Impact!"), he sucks up Goemon into his mechanical guts, readying the both of them for a battle against the Wartime Kabuki Robot, Kashiwagi, who fancies some. Whatever that means.

A fantastic cut scene readys you for your fight as the controller of Goemon Impact. And the song? Well it's another 'interesting' one.

Impact!

To tot up his energy, Impact needs to compete in this mass-destruction of a level. (Which has to be played every time you die and want to return to fight Kashawagi.) Basically, the idea is to burn it along on rollerskates, smashing up houses, enemy cannons and traditional Japanese high-rises, earning yourself points and energy for every smashed piece of architecture. *Blast Corps* with a scary-faced loon? Sort of, except, you've got to try and avoid gaps in the ground and mid-height bridges. Your reactions, as the hulking great Impact, are that much slower so jumping has to be done in advance. (Try to keep to the lower buildings – the taller ones slow you up a bit.)

Kashawagi

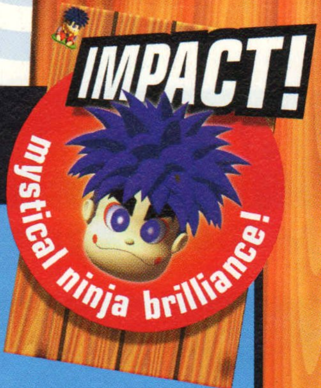
And here is your enemy. Nasty-looking blighter.

So it's best to keep hitting repeatedly in the face, with an extendible robot arm. Obvious really.

The big robot takes some putting down, as documented previously in **N64**. But, until you actually come to the contest, you don't realise how many different moves you have available to you. Actually, by combining the A and B buttons you can produce some pretty nifty combos and, in conjunction with the right shoulder button, you can reel Kashawagi in and give him a severe whacking round the chops. In fact, using that process of sending out your chain-arm and bringing him into you is the best way to knock points off his 1500 hits. (You, in contrast, can only have a maximum of 500.) There's two things to watch out for, mind. The first is Kashawagi's humungous missiles, both the spinning tops and the standard doodlebug-style bombs. These can be destroyed via a couple of fist hits. Slightly more ticklish is the second problem of his hologram, which appears in sparkling pink form and zips about in front of you. Hit it three times and it disappears (coming back a second time later on) and by ensuring you don't go to punch him until the very last second, you should be alright. I am Impact. I am Machinery. I am a Metal Being. Yes.

Ah! EXTREME CLOSE UP! And not a time to start practicing your palmistry.

Festival Temple Castle



The Festival Temple Castle is a sublime example of platforming prowess and a good indication of what to expect from the game. It's also considerably more challenging than anything that has come before in *Mystical Ninja*. To enter, you first need to locate Sasuke and his Fire Cracker Bomb (clue: after the second boss, seek out the desert, and the roll of film, and take a picture from the top of the tree in the lake) and then work your way into the cave on the outskirts of Zazen. Then, and only then warrior, can you destroy the cracked stone doors that hide the level. (Different strokes for different folks, see?)

Festival Temple is actually quite similar to some of the sections in *Mario 64*, except – in keeping with the style of the game – it's somewhat more (how do you say?) *odd*. (You only need get to the huge waterfall room and then the platform-to-platform fish to realise that.) It's also one of the few stages that truly requires the skills of your *entire* party, one after another. When Goemon's not whipping about the multi-levelled arenas via his chain pipe and the star blocks, Sasuke's freezing red hot platforms with his Kunai of Severe Cold. And, of course, to get into the the level in the first place, you need to use Ebisumaru's Mini-Ebisu Magic.

△ The graphics are truly beautiful to behold with loads and loads of variation.

MIND THE MAP

There's two invaluable discoveries to be made every time you enter a boss's palace, particularly as your default map (used via Right-C) can't be accessed once it gets to sections in the game like these. The first is Mr. Elly Fant, a small appropriately named, erm, elephant that grants you, once collected, a map of the inside of the enemy castle. These aren't always obviously hidden, but most of the time they'll be situated in the corners of rooms or on higher platforms. The second discovery is Mr. Arrow which proves just as important (and gives you an idea of when you're getting closer to the boss) as it gives you the exact location of the end-of-level guardian. These are almost certainly hidden away. Part of *Mystical Ninja*'s plan, plainly, to have you explore its challenge as much as possible.

Boss!

Some of you familiar with the SNES *Legend of the Mystical Ninja* will recognise this boss as being the Ghost Lady. Here, of course, she's a good deal more impressive, hovering translucently as your character gawps up. It doesn't really matter who you use to play as, as the only thing you need to be able to do, is hit her shiny discs back to whence they came, i.e. her. First, she'll throw off green coloured discs, which you must avoid by pelting them round the circular arena. Then, she'll fire two red discs. Hit these back to her and they'll thwack her in the head, causing a ripple of an explosion. You need to do this nine or ten times before she decides to get violent, chucking explosive discs down towards you. Try to avoid them as best you can, all the while continuing to hit back her red discs, and she'll eventually wilt...

◁ Now would be the time to start worrying.

▽ The explosive discs start to rain down and the explosion effects start to fill the screen.

◁ The ghost lady in all spectral, semi-see-through glory.

Weird!

So, the newest addition to the Peach Mountain brigade is revealed. Lily, or Mysterious Woman as she's initially known, is possibly married to Mysterious Man, although (at this stage) you're not really sure. P'raps their just mates. Anyway, apart from being as tall as the ceiling, she seems fairly harmless but speaks rather oddly, ending every sentence with "la, la" as though trying to... stage... the... ultimate... musical. Gulp.

GO! GO!

Sub be good to me

Like *Mario*, *Mystical Ninja* breaks up the play with some fabulous sub-games. Often these spell the half-way point between bosses or point towards the next part of the quest. In a roundabout way...

Koryuta the Dragon

Not a blue-brick road but the neck of a very large, and rather ugly, dragon.

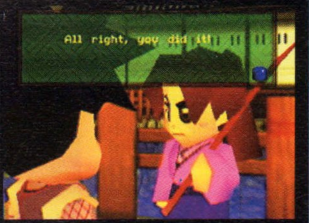
The dancing kids will sleep safe soon.

This little blighter takes a bit of mastering. After working your way to a Travel Bureau besieged by the dragon of the title, Goemon is whisked off to the body of Koryuta, and made to fight his way along to a mini boss. The task is made harder by the fact that the dragon swings from side to side, making enemy attacks harder to judge. However, once at the mini boss, use your chain pipe to catch him from a distance (all the while avoiding those troublesome metal ball-things he fires). The prize for successful completion is Yae's flute. Useful, indeed.

Fisherwoman

Goemon tries to ensure that none of them get away.

Hooray! One blue fish caught. This'll improve your bargaining power with the woman on the river bank.

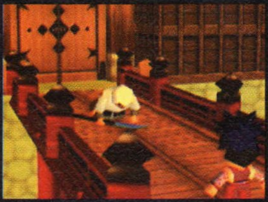


This lovely lady sets you a bit of an odd challenge, in exchange for information on how to defeat the guard of the gates to the city. After collecting three blue fish, five yellow fish and eight pink (they're actually red) fish from the river around her prime fishing spot, she will hand you a block of wood which (as you'll see in a moment) is fairly useful in helping you to progress. Later, you have to come back to her, she'll appear as a really tiny version of her previous self and she'll lead you to the second boss's palace.

Guard of the gates

'Blast you far away?' Not if Goemon can help it.

Embarrass the guard to make him let you pass by.



And, here *is* the Guard of the Gates. He's a big bloke and won't let you through unless you allow him to challenge you in a scrap. And this is where that wooden block you got from the Fisherwoman comes in handy. Simply lob the block towards the guard at the instant he hits the ground. You have to do this three times and he'll keel over – embarrassed, begging you not to tell anyone – but he also has a tendency to block your efforts if your timing's off. Oh, and there's a time limit as well, just to complicate things a bit.

RPG? Action RPG? 3D platformer? Hmm. Well, a bit of all of them, in truth. And then a bit more. And that's the beauty of *Mystical Ninja* and the reason it'll appeal to almost anybody. You can be an expert in any of the aforementioned game styles, or an expert in none.

The main point with this version, of course, is that it's in English and, therefore, unlikely to present the same sort of problems the Japanese version did. The story – in all its utterly outlandish glory – can be presented in full technicolour and your conversations with the various participants tied in to that. But, pleasantly, this makes *Mystical Ninja* no easier. Especially as, during longish bouts of chitter-chatter, the clues you're given don't so much tell you where to go as *hint* at what to do next.

Also, we believed we got 50% of the way into the game on its original release and, here, we've passed that point after some concentrated play but, crucially, (thanks to the wonderment of deadlines) not *quite* finished it. We're almost there. Almost. But, agonisingly, not quite. And, that's another ripe blessing: this game is HUGE. Or at least insists on enough exploration and fabulous sub-games that you're quite often going sideways in order to advance.

It's a clever game, not only because there's simply so much to do, but because you're never quite sure what's going to come next. Mini boss? End-of-level boss? Ludicrous sub-game involving a big yellow man and some falling shrinking pills? Erm, yes, *quite*. *Mystical Ninja* is a supreme example of game invention, swamping proceedings with strangeness and playing, looking and moving with all the beauty of a blue-haired *Mario 64*.

Indeed, in its efforts to equal the achievements of Nintendo's premier N64 outing, it's actually quite successful. But, it's an action RPG! Nope. It's not. Not *really*. It's more like *Mario 64* with talky bits and – for that reason alone – *Mystical Ninja* has a good deal more universal appeal than it'll probably get credit for. One piece of advice: don't presume that this won't appeal to you. It just might, you know.

The feel of the game is actually quite old school, heralding fairly exactly back to the days of 2D *Goemon*. This is often reflected in the puzzles and tasks at hand (which aren't particularly difficult) but, due to the restrictions of 16-bit, the freedom of movement we enjoy here was never possible in the original games. Additionally, there's the bosses which are not only an astronomical leap from the SNES and NES versions, but a stunning demonstration of what the *N64* is capable of. Especially the two robot battles.

And, graphically, it's impressively expert. The 3D environments range from the pretty to the absolutely wondrous and, apart from some lazy 2D trees that spoil the rotund feel of the landscapes, Goemon's wanderings quite often prove as fascinating a sight-seeing tour as they do a necessary part of the game. And, according to some paintings in our office encyclopaedia, the time capsule that is 16th Century Japan appears to have been exactly recreated.

The translation is still a bit suspect (Konami promise this *will* be sorted prior to its release, here) but at least there's no hideous Americanisms (except for a single, wretching "I'm gonna kick his butt"). Indeed, it's more likely this is a direct translation from Japanese – instead of the usual roundabout, via-the-US scheme of things – allowing *Mystical Ninja* to maintain its traditional Japanese charm, which aids the overall package no end.

Perhaps *Mystical Ninja*'s only real fault is its camera. Unlike *Mario 64*, there is no Lakitu to ease your platform-hopping worries. Instead, it opts for an automatic perspective that swings behind you every time you remain stationary for a while. You can zoom in and zoom out, and also view your arena from time to time, but neither of these offer any real antidote to the problem of 'camera sticking' (the old, camera-can't-move-round-because-there's-a-wall-in-the-way problem is here for all to see).

And, really and honestly, because very few of the jumps are simple (to the side, above and below is the least of your worries – try moving platforms, and moving platforms that either move very fast or only appear once every ten seconds), you're left trying to fiddle with the camera perspective so that you can solve your cross-canyon worries. (It's probably at this point that you get a reminder of just how good *Super Mario 64* really is at this sort of thing.) Thankfully, though, you *can* become atuned to the way *Mystical Ninja* thinks and moves and the glitchy camera tends not to affect proceedings as much as it might have.

Overall, though, this is just the ticket for N64 owners awaiting a bridge between *Mario 64* and its sequel, and a perfect example of how well the machine can be used by third-party developers – if they work at it. It's great to see Konami back on form after the *Nagano* disaster, and the slight non-event of *NBA Pro*. Hooray for them and Hooray for the N64's new blue-haired hero.

TIM WEAVER

If you think those spiky things look dangerous, you'd be right. Avoid them.

Run, Goemon run! And be particularly wary of that large rolling dice-like thing!

Goemon prepares to accost a wandering old man. Gently, we hope.

N64 MAGAZINE STAR GAME

8 VISUALS
A disappointing camera means you quite often won't get the view of the levels you'd like.

7 SOUNDS
Nothing boundary-reshaping but the plink-plonk plinkety-plonkness will bring back memories from earlier SNES versions.

8 MASTERY
With English instigated, the game's conversation and clues are allowed to flourish and, with some idea of what you're doing, you'll find this irresistible.

8 LIFESPAN
It's not a *hard* game but it's a big one and, thus, there's plenty to sink your teeth into.

VERDICT
This is a sprawling, enjoyable adventure that works its socks off to square up to *Mario*.

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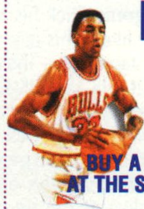

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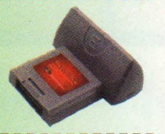

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PREVIOUSLY IN N64 We took a Future Look at *NBA Pro '98* back in issue 12.

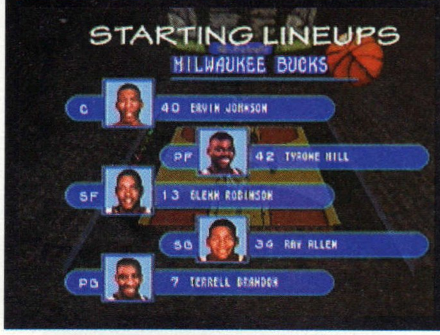
NBA Pro's crowds are rather poor 'flat' textures. Just look at them. Tsk.

The players, however, are excellent. They're so realistic you'll blink.

An adventurous attempt to score a 'three pointer'. And it failed. Dismally.

One of NBA Pro's top-down views. But from an angle.

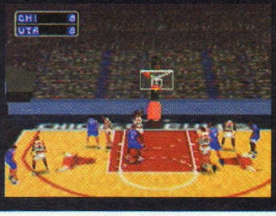
'Scrap, scrap, scrap!' chanted the crowd. But to little avail. Sadly, there's no fighting in NBA Pro '98.



The starting line-up of the Milwaukee Bucks. Just as it says. You can alter the team if you like.

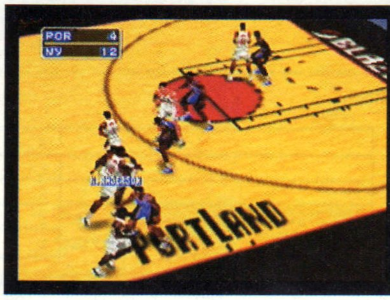
The standard top view, with no pesky diagonal slant.

How I long to score. Damn the backboard! Damn the backb… etc.

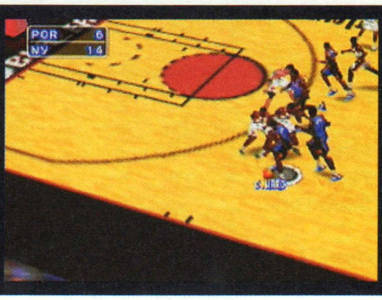


Dunksville! Basketball – Konami-style! – comes to your N64. But, is this everything-but-the-kitchen-sink effort a *Hangtime* or a *Courtside*…?

NBA PRO

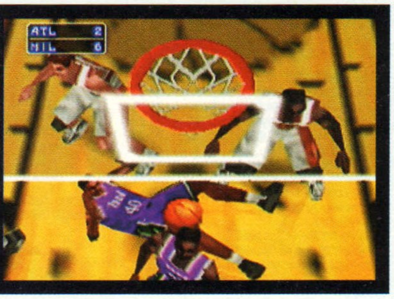


The thing about funny angled views is that, well, they're funny angled views. And they're rubbish.



Like this one. Moving in diagonals tires your thumb.

Now this is the view we like best. Hooray! More points!



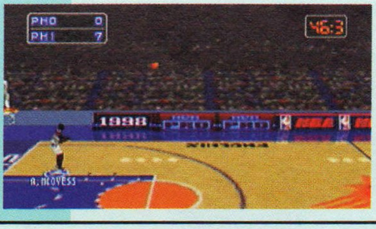
HOW TO... win your first game

Basketball may be a team sport, but *NBA Pro '98* rather encourages heroic efforts from individual players. Indeed, it's possible to score more points by performing solo runs on the default skill level than it is to use patient passing play. But simply legging it down the court is often not enough. Let us guide you through your first match...

1 ***It's important to remember that there are two kinds of run your players can perform. The first, activated by the N64 pad's trigger button, is the standard dash. The other can be used with a tap of Bottom-C. This is a faster sprint, best used to pass opposition players blocking your path.***

2 ***As every able body on the court is a possible obstruction, running sideways will have you colliding with another individual in a worryingly short space of time. Therefore, it's better to move in diagonal bursts across the court. As NBA's artificial intelligence is geared towards blocking rather than tackling, players will find it hard to make any challenge for possession of the ball.***

3 ***Passes are handy when you find yourself obstructed by a number of players. Don't bother with dummy moves – the console AI rarely falls for such trickery. Simply aim the joystick in the direction of the appropriate player and let fly. Be aware, though, that excessive passing can waste valuable time. Leads are generally gained through offensive mistakes, rather than the defensive frailties.***



4 ***When attacking the opposition basket, it's wise to make a dunk attempt from a frontal position. Alternate between running and walking and it's fairly easy to confuse your opposition, getting a clear run for an easy two points. Remember to use the player with the best shooting capability to take three-pointer attempts.***

5 ***Defending is especially difficult for the NBA Pro newcomer because the game doesn't automatically switch to the player nearest the ball. The best solution is to move the player under your control in front of the basket. By simply obstructing any potential goal attempts, you increase the chance of the opposition incurring a shot clock penalty. It's wise to tackle when you can, but be aware that it's very difficult to wrestle the ball from stationary players.***

PHATS 'N' FIGURES

Like American football and baseball, basketball encourages an almost obsessive stat fervour in Stateside fans. It's not surprising, then, that *NBA Pro '98* is packed to the last meg with all manner of facts and figures. It even features snapshots of many big-name players.

Those who wish to do more than observe various collections of figures from the '96-97 season, can actually change the composition of their chosen team. It's possible to transfer players between teams, strengthening your squad. You can release current players (re-signing them at a later date, should you so wish), court players overlooked by other teams and even snap up basketball heroes of your own creation. Of course, such detail comes at a cost – to back-up *NBA Pro* data you'll need to sacrifice an entire Controller Pak.

'98

NBA Pro '98				
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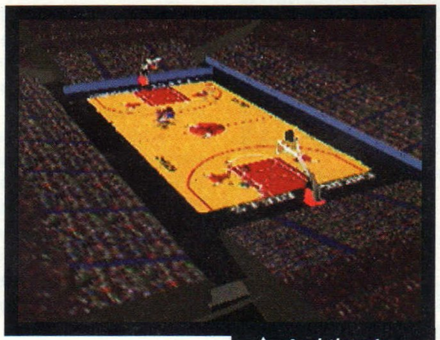
Basketball was invented by YMCA instructor Dr. James Naismith in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1891. His intention at the time was probably to invent an activity that combined solid exercise with mind-engaging rules. Apart from the obvious lack of PE merit, we think that Dr. Naismith would like Konami's electric tribute to his game; he'd have appreciated its open gameplay and careful balancing of the need to both simulate and entertain. With extended play he'd perhaps criticise its artificial intelligence, before confessing that he always preferred netball, actually. But then again, perhaps not...

Despite their dip in form with *Nagano Winter Olympics*, Konami obviously take a great deal of pride in their games, as *NBA Pro '98* demonstrates. Known as *'In The Zone'* in Japan and on the PlayStation, *NBA Pro* has been redesigned and updated so as to better suit its new platform. It's a polished release – but not, however, without its fair share of faults.

Visually, *Pro* boasts accomplished animation – its player movement is fluid, well designed and realistic. Sadly, the same cannot be said of its courts and crowds. Functional at best, the crowd is a static backdrop. And does everything have to be *quite* so fuzzy? You half expect to hear the announcer pipe up in a turn-of-the-century



△ *And there's the court. Nice. Shame the crowds are dump, though.*

GO! GO!

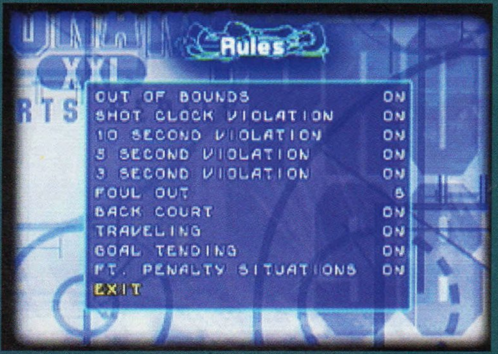
GOOD VIBRATIONS
NBA Pro '98 is compatible with Nintendo's Rumble Pak. While this is a good thing in many respects, its usage of force-feedback hardware is rather unusual. Its primary usage is to accentuate dunks and, as a result, most vibrations appear somewhat divorced from in-game proceedings. Maybe a system based on physical contact alone would have been a far more effective idea – but perhaps that's something for consideration in *NBA Pro '99*...

HOW TO... break all the rules

For the casual basketball fan, *NBA Pro*'s option to disable various game rules is a welcome bonus. You can remove the various timer penalties, such as the shot clock, and it's also possible to turn off basics such as the back court rule. Best of all, this ability is a standard option on the main menu – you don't need to tap in mind-numbing button combinations to alter each game law.

It's important to note that this ability isn't a 'cheat' of any description. By switching any particular rule on or off, you also give your opponent the same advantage. So, for example, if you find it difficult to tackle, it wouldn't be wise to turn off the shot clock rule – unless, of course, you enjoy the idea of frantically defending until each quarter ends.

For those unfamiliar with basketball, an ideal setting would be to disable the 'back court', 'travelling' and the timer violations. This makes *NBA '98* faster and eminently more playable for those with little patience.



The ball's in the ne... oops, wrong sport.

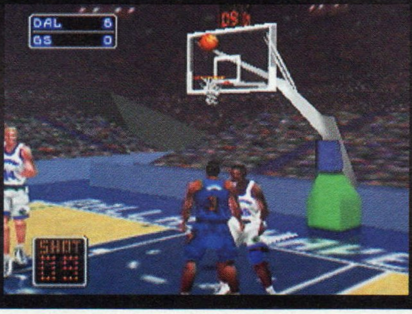
Are players allowed to give piggy-backs to make themselves taller?

T. Hill looks to score. And, indeed, he did.

Dallas equipped their players with cattle prods... and lo, a victory!

Last, and most definitely least, a miss. The baskets should be bigger, you know.

You have to wait ages for your opponent to take his penalty shots.



London accent: "Cor, it's a right pea souper 'ere tonight, and no mistake. Young Pippin can't be playing for the Bulls for this match, on account of all that plague we got goin' on. Roll on penicillin, that's what I say."

Aside from the graphics, we're not particularly comfortable with *NBA Pro*'s artificial intelligence, either. It appears too rigid, applying pre-written formulas that make play against N64-controlled opponents predictable. Ok, so any form of CPU-driven opponent will inevitably lack the imagination of most flesh-and-blood players, but we still want to be surprised occasionally. We want the teams to adapt their play to counter our attacks. We want the Chicago Bulls to realise that we're using one particularly skilled player to score three point baskets from outside the area, and to mark that man out of the game.

As the saying goes, practice makes perfect, but changing character in *NBA Pro* is the exception that disproves the rule. The game relies on the player to do this themselves, and no matter how accomplished one becomes with manual selection of defending players, it's still never easy to protect your basket. A list of minor complaints could continue. And, indeed, it shall.

Boom-shaka-lak! The speed of *NBA Pro*'s players is measured in digital terms, not analogue – there are separate run buttons. You may as well be using a standard D-pad. Tsk. Other problems also annoy:

Boom-shaka-lak! You have to sit and wait for ages while your opponent takes penalty shots.

Boom-shaka-lak! Players are solid barriers. Touch them at all, and your run is brought to a halt. Trouble is, your own players get in the way, too.

Boom-shaka-lak! Get out of the way! Oh no! A city centre-style gridlock around the opposition goal!

If this review seems rather over-critical, Konami have only themselves to blame. By creating a new benchmark with *ISS64*, they widened the gulf between truly great and merely good sports games. *NBA Pro* is in the latter category. Bright but not brilliant, semi-professional but not pro, Konami's basketball game is still, however, *far* better than *NBA Hangtime*.

So, with only one real competitor available for the N64 (until Nintendo's *Courtside* in the summer), *NBA Pro* becomes its finest basketball game more by default than design. It's not all bad – far from it. Multiplayer games (with up to four players) can be very enjoyable, and there are a lot of options to tweak in order to suit your individual tastes. But the '98 attached to the *NBA Pro* name suggests we'll see a seasonal update this time next year. Should its developers learn from this year's mistakes, that could be the basketball game to watch out for.

JAMES PRICE

7 VISUALS
The players are excellent. The crowds are awful, though – and the courts could be better.

4 SOUNDS
Um... was there any sound? Squeaks and poor music, as I recall.

6 MASTERY
Other basketball games would struggle to rival its player animation.

7 LIFESPAN
Plenty of options, the ability to alter players and an all important multiplayer option. Mmmm.

VERDICT
Good, but hardly brilliant. The question is: do you *really* like basketball?

71%

Hold it wide open!
Madder than Mario.
Deadlier than Doom.
Greater than Goldeneye.
Redline: a Molotov cocktail of fast living, cars, bikes and sex.
REDLINE
Hold it wide open!
ISSUE 1 ON SALE THURSDAY APRIL 23RD
Special introductory price: £1!

PREVIOUSLY IN N64 We reviewed the Japanese version of *SK* back in issue 12. Turn back there for even more info on the game.

△ *The final course and not a flake of snow in sight. Doesn't affect our kids, though.*

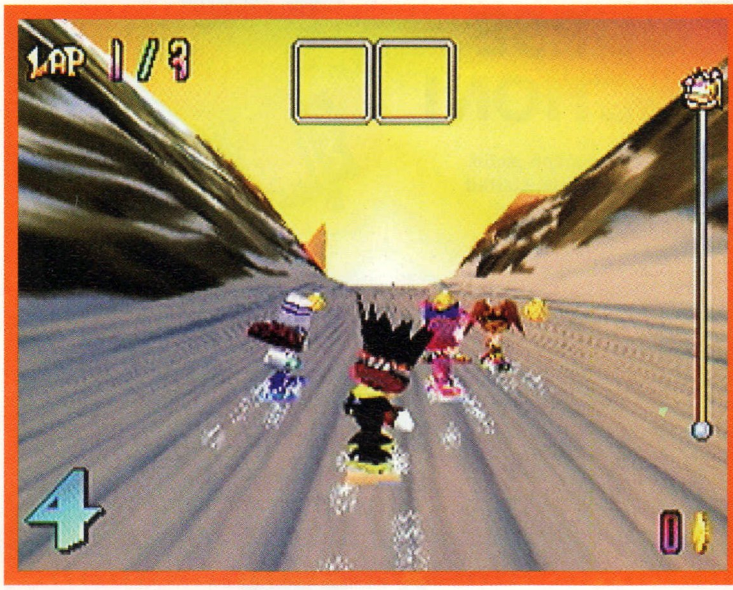
Real mist – not the Turok style fogging. ▷

SNOW

△ *Judicious use of the power-up fan can see you scoot through the field in double quick time.*

▽ *Jump starts at the ready. (Nice balloon, there.)*

Jump off the chair lift ready for the next lap. ▷



△ No, not golden bushes, flaming torches. It's the Night Highway course.

◁ A poor start will leave you trailing in the other boarders' wakes.

JUMP STARTING THE OLD MAN

Bearing in mind that the races in *Snowboard Kids* tend to be retina-burning, seat-of-your-pants type affairs, jumping the gun at the start can sometimes make all the difference in that vital first race to the ski-lift. As with *Mario Kart*, *Diddy Kong Racing* and all the others, it's just a matter of timing. Wait for the Santa look-a-like to float into view, point his pistol in the air, and then hold forward and press "jump." If done correctly, your little racer will bunny hop into the lead and you can manoeuvre him into collecting shed loads of coins for later.

Don't whatever you do, though, keep jump pressed in before the start. Your snowboarder will flip head over heels thinking it's time for Stunt Masters, and everyone else will just bog off down the mountain, leaving you with a mouth full of yellow snow.

Who ever said that Nintendo didn't listen to its Western fans? Look! They've bought up *Snobow Kids* especially for release over here – and it's even better fun in English.

N64 MAGAZINE STAR GAME

BOARD KIDS

Snowboard Kids
NINTENDO/ATLUS
Out now | 64M | 1-4
Controller Pak | ~~Cartridge back-up~~ | Rumble Pak
£40

Despite numerous outings on other formats, computer game snowboarding has yet to be really, well – you know – much fun. The question up to now has been: can falling down a mountain strapped to a plank really be a rewarding electronic experience? Given the N64's first brush with the sport – *Nagano Winter Olympics* – 'no' might well have been the answer formulating in many people's minds.

However, in the nick of time, a game has arrived to cast away all those doubts – a torch to relight the flickering flame of N64 winter sports. For if anyone believed that snowboarding wasn't eventually destined for N64 greatness, *Snowboard Kids* is a triumphant contradiction.

Snowboard Kids is the new – and only slightly different – name to the super cool *Snobow Kids* which we had the delightful pleasure of reviewing on Japanese import back in Issue 12. Coming, as it does, from Atlus (who?) we weren't expecting much of it and we were genuinely chuffed to find that we had a bit of gem on our hands. Now that everything's in English, we can understand even more of what's going on, and the past couple of months spent playing it have not dulled our enthusiasm.

Why should we be thankful that the *Kids* have come to fill the gap left by *1080°*'s ludicrous Christmas delay? You'll be wanting to read on to find out that…

GO! GO!

STUNTED

We're indebted to a Alkan Hassan who wrote to us via E-Mail to clear up a few points about the stunts in *SK*. Let's hand over to him.

"Firstly (as your review pointed out), by holding down A and locking your steering you can perform a basic stunt by moving the control stick, and letting go of the button, just as you reach the lip of the jump.

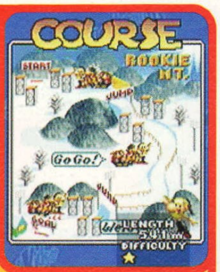
"However, pushing any of the four C buttons, while in the air, makes your boarder hold his board at the front, back, left or right which can also earn you some coinage. If you hold your board for a long time and do a spin, you'll earn around $190."

Since we've had the PAL version of the game, however, the game's training mode has become far more informative. Playing through it, we've found out that each character has a 'Special Move' stunt whose successful completion will earn $250. Now all we have to do is find the moves...

TOP COURSE-BY-COURSE SNOWBOARDING ACTION!

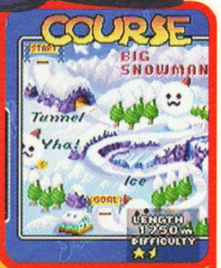
Don't waste your time plotting out the games courses with hexadecimal graph paper, protractors and that gaudy-looking compass your Mum bought you when you started "Big School." No, you just sit back with a nice mug of hot chocolate, a big slab of chocolate cake and your comfiest slippers and allow N64's legendary guide to the slopes show you where it's best to go on the piste.

ROOKIE MOUNTAIN



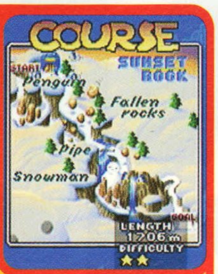
From its location high up in the Appalachian Mountains (possibly), Curu Curu offers a gentle introduction to the world of *Snowboard Kids*. The course is very self-contained so you shouldn't find yourself plummeting down some huge abyss and the laps are fairly short and sweet. Tips wise, there's not really much we can say that won't come naturally with practice. There are no real "alternate routes" to the course, so all you need to worry about is going fast, maintaining a decent racing line and not falling off too much. Obviously.

BIG SNOWMAN



Things get a bit more challenging from here on in as "Big Snowman" throws in its fair share of points from which you can skid off, for some time-wasting crash activities. There's also a fair amount of weaving to be done as well, due to the tricky rock formations and Douglas Pine fir trees all over the place. It's still fairly straightforward and coming back to tackle it after the likes of Grass Valley will seem tame. But placed as it is, second track in, it should teach you all you need to know for the game ahead.

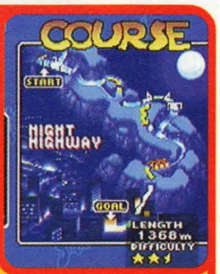
SUNSET ROCK



This one's a bit too scary for our liking. Oh sure, the legion of Pingu waggling about the place look endearing to start with, but after a while it starts to get a bit too much like Alfred Hitchcock's "The Birds". Everywhere you look there seems to be hundreds of the little blighters staring ominously as you glide past. Brrrrrrrrrrr!!!!

Again, the "shortcuts" are conspicuous by their absence, but there are some basic life-saving tips we can offer. When approaching the falling rock and the regurgitating snowman, maintain a steady straight line. If you start messing about you're more likely to get hit. Sunset Rock also provides you with what is the biggest coin winning opportunity thus far. As you approach the frozen stream, you should see the little pole spanning across it. If you press jump at just the right time, your snowboarder should do a dinky little jump, slide precariously across it and earn himself a cool three hundred.

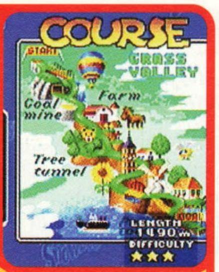
NIGHT HIGHWAY



With a beautiful view of the city at night, Highway is recommended park-up territory. It's also a bit of a fave with those who like to perform stunts as well, as it's absolutely littered with jumps and ramps. There are three shortcuts you can take advantage of. The first one and the third one both cut off sizeable chunks of the course and providing you slow it down big style, you should have no problem swerving your snowboard into them.

The second shortcut, however, is the real conundrum. It's an absolute swine to get into and requires you to angle your board about three days in advance. But make the leap and what do you get? A few extra coins and that's it. You may look flash getting in it but you feel a bit of a mug when it finally spits you out further down. One final note, the big long windy S that looks a bit harrowing on the map screen, should actually prove to be a doddle as you should have the knack of steering by now.

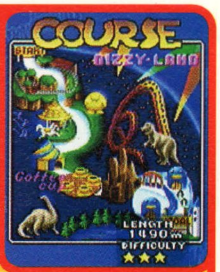
GRASS VALLEY



Oh! You slide down a hill, a very big hill in the country. With beautiful flowery fields, a coastal view and bears (doing what bears do best) in the woods, Grass Valley is as far removed from the real snowy world of snowboarding as you'd think was possible. It's more like that sliding down a hill on a big plastic bag nonsense that you used to get up to when you were about ten. As with "shortcut two" on Night Highway, the alternate routes down the mountain seem strangely longer and harder to do. They're full of tricky leaps and twisty turns and generally have you pulling stupid faces as you throw the joypad about. In fact, the only use we could think of for them is that they make a nice respite from the harrowing, battle-based antics of your opponents.

General tips are of the usual, stay away from the edge, variety. But, you'll want to take the first corner, after the ski-lift, in a big wide motion. Anything less and you'll splatter on the nice picket fencing.

DINO PARK

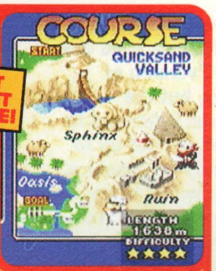


Whilst not quite as action-packed as Jurassic Park, at least in Dino Park the rides don't try to eat you. It's a nice and varied route but it's also ridiculously hard; the first few times you conquer it will be out of sheer fluke rather than any consummate skill you may think you possess.

There's something of a coin drought so it's best to take the right-hand ramp, near the start, which gives you plenty of dosh. Despite what the "In" sign says, it's impossible to gain access to the railway line here, which is a bit of a swizz. Again, we're back in "no proper shortcuts" territory. There is one little loop you can take in the dinosaur enclosure but that's about it. The one thing we will warn you about is the blind leap just before the water park. It's sneakily placed so if you're not doing full power, and can pull off a little jump in time, you're effectively dead. Keep a "fan" power-up in reserve if you want to be on the safe side.

QUICKSAND VALLEY

FIRST SECRET COURSE!

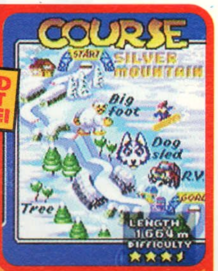


Win Gold on all the above tracks and you'll be presented with a copper pass. (Copper? I thought there was lots of money in this snowboarding lark?) While it may not look too impressive on your mantelpiece, it will grant you access to the first extra track.

Steeped in Egyptian mythology – well, a Sphinx and a couple of Pyramids to be precise – Quicksand is an absolute git of a course. There're twisty turny sections, and evil jumps aplenty, and there's absolutely no margin for error. For the first time ever, the computer players also split up when it comes to tackling the courses' shortcuts. So, rather than leaving you to it, you're constantly on the defensive. If you've got this far, you're obviously a snowboarding God, so any "tips" would be a bit patronising. Lets just say we'll pray for you.

SILVER MOUNTAIN

SECOND SECRET COURSE!



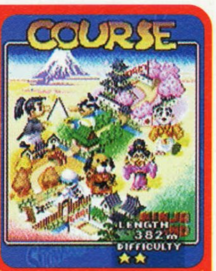
Set high up in the mountains and surrounded in dense, vision crippling fog, Silver Mountain will test the abilities of the toughest snowboarder. It's not the family of Abominable Snowmen and Woolly Mammoths that you have to worry about, but rather the fact that you can't see a thing in front of you.

Whereas normally you'd want to be out in front leading the pack, it's probably best if, for the first couple of laps, you trail someone like fat Tommy down the slope so you have an idea what's going on. With sheer drops on either side of you, the only way you're going to win is if you're either strong in the ways of The Force, or in possession of more jam than Hartleys. Shortcuts? None that we could see, mate.

NINJA LAND

FINAL SECRET COURSE!

After witnessing an incredibly bizarre ending where all the characters get involved in a punch up over a burger, *Snowboard Kids* finally rewards you with one last track. Set high up a Japanese mountain, the scenery is some of the best seen so far, with beautiful cherry blossoms and ornate bridges spanning your route.



From a technical point of view the course is not that difficult; a fairly straight forward nine lap race with no diversions. However, what does cause problems is the presence of a super-fast mystical ninja called Sinobin. As soon as the gun goes off, he's away with a flash and you have to put in the slide of your life to catch him up and beat him. EXTRA BONUS THING: If you manage to finish the race first, Sinobin becomes selectable and you can take advantage of his three snowboards to trash all your previous records. Nice!

RED FIVE STANDING BY:

Although not quite up to the standard of their blue brothers (arf, arf!!) you can still wreak some top havoc with the red power-ups. Unless you're desperate, or on a really tight budget, you're probably best off ditching the woefully inept bombs and ice-beams and just sticking with the snowmen, the slappers and the parachutes. Don't just fire them off willy-nilly though. The key to success is timing. Wait until your opponent is on a particularly tricky part of the course before letting fly with a particularly tasty broadside. Parachutes are obviously the best to use because they're just so darn devious. If you can time their impact so they hit just as your rival reaches the highest peak on the ramp, he/she should be launched about 27 miles into the stratosphere.

WHAT THE FFFFFFFFF??

Rather than just being there to up the cutesy rating another notch, the little yelp like exclamations your snowboarder gives out before being hit by a power-up, are actually quite life-saving. As soon as the little speech bubble appears on screen, you need to take some major evasive action. Start weaving like a man possessed, veer off at some ridiculous angle, do whatever it takes to stay alive. If you've got an invisibility thing, use it now to become immune to whatever anyone throws at you.

GO! GO!

ALL A-BOARD, ALL A-BOARD YEAH, WOO WOO!

BLUE THUNDER?
Now these are much better. With a bit of skill you can easily use a blue power-up to turn a fourth place embarrassment into a last minute win. The gold coin/frying pans are obviously your biggest priority, but they're ridiculously elusive. Thankfully, you can have just as much fun with the fan, invisibility and the spooky old ghosty. The ghosty in particular is superb. Inflicting a good, old fashioned haunting on the race leader will have them parping their pants and travelling at a ridiculous snail's pace. Providing they're not too far in front (and providing you're not absolute cack at the game) you should be back up front with Nadia Popov. Before you get too excited though, it's probably best to point out that if you're already in the lead, the game will "reward" you with a rock every time – much like the single banana injustice in *Mario Kart*. Oh, thanks then.

As well as giving you a one player game that's absolutely rock hard, Atlus have also kindly included a multiplayer setting that's amongst the best we've seen so far. Our only misgiving is that, unless you're playing on a TV that's clearly visible from space, everything's a bit on the 'ickle and blurry side.

What really marks out *Snowboard*'s multiplayer mode, though is that it's incredibly competitive. There's none of that build-up-a-massive-unassailable-lead-and-coast-to-victory kind of boredom that soon kicked in with *Diddy Kong Racing*. Like *Mario Kart*, the power-ups are weighted so that people at the back get stronger ones and people at the front have to make do with rocks. We've always thought that multiplayer gaming is all about close-fought competition, and every single race in *Snowboard Kids* is fraught with tension right up to the finish line. Superb.

Four-player games are what the N64 is all about and this one's top. ▷

◁ *'No Entry?' That's a bit dull. A course map would've been better.*

It's only been a couple of issues since we went all dewy eyed over the original NTSC version of *Snowboard Kids*, but the intervening months haven't dimmed its big nose charms one jot. It's not up to Nintendo's high standards for graphics, frame rate or general whizz-bang special effects, but somehow that just doesn't seem to matter.

Because *Snowboard Kids* isn't about technical innovation. It's about excitement. It's about aggression. And it's about sliding down the mountain giving it "large" to your opponents. It's not all just about racing either. If, for some reason, you lose all powers of rational thought and get fed up with the "normal" game, you can also have a decent laugh playing on the other options. Like the Skill Games, Time Attack and the Stunt Mode.

One of the Skill Games has you hurtling down the course, aiming for the little speed up fans, in an attempt to trash the existing course record. It may not sound like instant excitement, but if you hit several of them on the run, you'll build up quite a speed and have to really wrestle with the analogue stick to keep your boarder on track.

The second Skill Game is even better. In addition to your board of fury, you are also equipped with a rather nifty looking onboard cannon, which you can use to blast away at the army of snowmen at the side of the track. It's obviously based on those biathlon events, where some bloke skis for a bit, and then shoots for a bit, and then skis for a bit again, but you'll probably get the most enjoyment out of it if you imagine the faces of people you work with as you squeeze the trigger. We may be labouring the point a bit here, but this one little "extra" has far more fun than all the events of *Nagano* combined. It's just like those old winter games affairs on the Commodore 64.

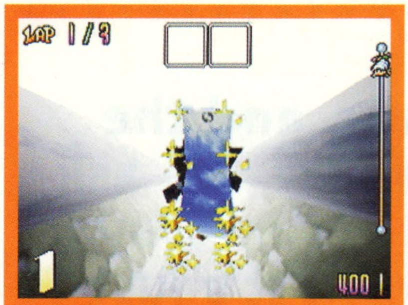
Unfortunately, the Stunt Mode brings the game crashing back down to the world of the dull. But this is much more to do with the nature of the event than the game itself. There's not a great deal you can do except go to one side of the "half-pipe", pull off some unfeasible stunt and then go to the other side again. You'll probably want to have a go on it about, oooooooooooh, twice!

Snowboard Kids' strengths though are its subtle handling – where diagonal pulls back on the analogue stick see your snowboard's edge catch the snow, dig in and pull you around – and it's incredibly competitive racing. Even in one-player mode – where most racing games quickly die – the CPU opposition are constantly

LIFT AND SEPARATE

Each course in *Snowboard Kids* requires you to complete at least two 'laps' off the piste. This involves racing down the track normally and then, once at the bottom, hopping onto the ski lift, riding back to the top and doing the whole thing over again. It's an excellent touch and ensures all the races last for a good long time.

To stand a good chance of winning, you're going to want to memorise the placement of the ski-lifts around the finish areas. Most of them are stuck right in the corners, so remember which side to aim for as you approach and then take it at full pelt. Don't bother doing one of those poncey arcs that downhill skiers do after a run; this will just waste time and leave you open to a bit of "queue-jumping" from all the racers following in behind you.



△ Sparkly star spangles signify super stunt shows. Nice!

WAY OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA!

Beat the final hidden track – Ninja Land – and you'll be rewarded with Sinobin, the super-fast ninja character who makes that final track such a tricky proposition.

Apart from being fast, Sinobin also has the strange honour of being able to snowboard on one of three platforms: a small rush mat, a carpet/scroll type thing or a ninja sword. These three correspond to the Freestyle, All Around and Alpine boards of the other characters.

Sinobin is such an accomplished boarder, however, that he can usually opt for the fastest of the three – the sword – and still experience little difficulty getting around the tightest of corners.

DO THE HUSTLE:

OK, we'll admit that the scrap for the ski-lift at the end of each "lap" can sometimes be a bit irritating. Actually make that very irritating. There you are, you've managed to bag yourself first place, only for some reckless oaf to give you a broadside and nick the first seat back up the mountain. But just turn those tables around for a minute, soldier. If it's you whose administering the battering rather than just receiving it, we're talking instant psychotic gratification. Try sliding in at full speed or rapidly pressing the jump button to cause the most upset.

▽ The inscrutable sphinx stares on as Tommy slips past.

▽ 'Sheep on strings' according to Andrea. Chinese lanterns to the rest of us.

△ Nice wide pistes. Things can get all too narrow and difficult very suddenly, though. And watch out for the penguins.

hassling you from behind; delivering killer power-ups, at perfectly judged moments, and generally frustrating the hell out of your efforts to win. The multiplayer mode proves that the CPU has to be involved to create a successful two, three and four-player game. The weighting of power-ups – strong for boarders at the back, weak for those in front – ensures that, while the most skilled player usually wins races, the battle is tense and close-fought right to the line.

All the criticisms that have been thrown at *Snowboard Kids* have largely been born out of people missing vital bits. Only six tracks? Nope, you failed to win the hidden three. No lastability? No, you didn't play the multiplayer mode or the Skill Games. Difficult to control? Well, you're just not very good at games, are you. Even those who doubted that the game would look any good on British machines have been proved wrong. With the PAL version of the game in our very hands, we can tell you that Nintendo and Atlus have surpassed themselves with the conversion. There's a small black strip at the bottom of the screen (similar in size to *ISS64*'s) and the game plays a mite slower than the NTSC original. That's all though – it's close to perfect. This speed difference will only be noticeable if you've already played a Japanese or American version of the game and it's a far cry from *Mario Kart*'s 15% time lag. Hooray then, great conversions appear to be the future from now on.

1080° Snowboarding's not out until the autumn. *Snowboard Kids* is a brilliant fun pack of £39.99 brilliance. What further encouragement could you possibly need?

JAMES ASHTON

WATCH OUT...
...for a full and fantastic *Snowboard Kids* stunt, and multiplayer, guide in next month's **N64** Magazine.

N64 Magazine STAR GAME

7 VISUALS
Something of an acquired taste admittedly, but they easily do the job.

8 SOUNDS
Strangely evocative of 1980's John Hughes films – far better than the usual Techno Hell we're subjected to.

8 MASTERY
CPU racers who you'll quickly believe to be spawn of the devil, and the twistiest tracks this side of *F-Zero X*.

8 LIFESPAN
This is no breezy walk in the park. A refreshingly steep learning curve.

VERDICT
Mario Kart on ice. Technically a little ragged but still enormously good fun.

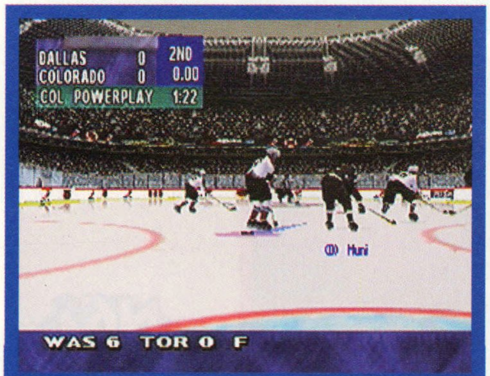
86%

PREVIOUSLY IN N64 We previewed *NHL* very briefly back in issue 11.

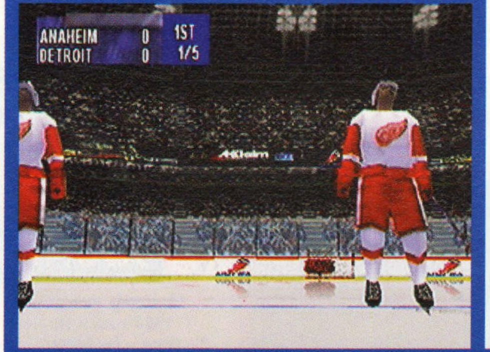
NHL Breakaway '98			
ACCLAIM			
Out now	128M		1-4
	Controller Pak	Cartridge back-up	Rumble Pak
£60			

With winter almost over, and the Olympics a fading memory, we ask if Acclaim's game can better *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* or if it's just skating on thin ice?

NHL BREAK

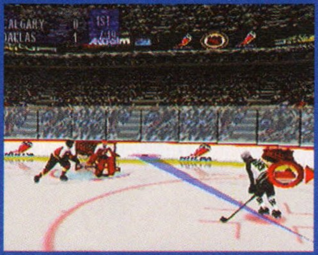


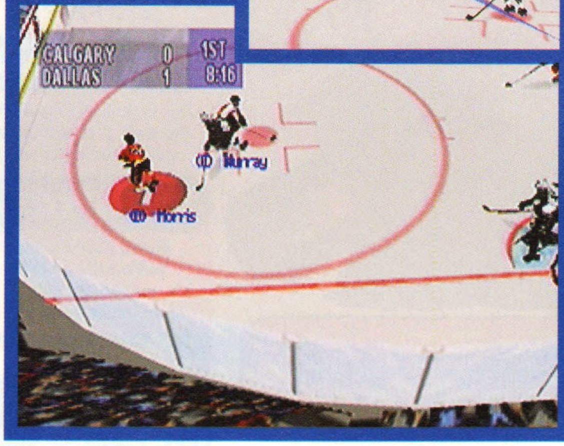
It all looks very impressive from this angle but just try actually playing it!



The line-up for the national anthem... ten men, strong and true.

The red trace behind the puck is excellent for following the game's action.

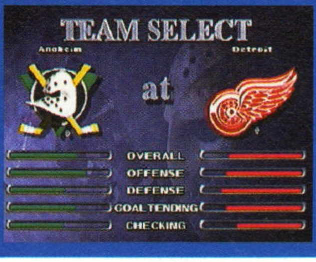




From the moment that Electronic Arts' *EA Hockey* first appeared on the Mega Drive, us Brits have been strangely fascinated by a game that we usually have little to do with. A sport dominated by the Canadians and Americans doesn't often hold much interest for a nation obsessed with the slower, more technical game of football but, for some strange reason, computer versions of ice hockey have been embraced by thousands.

Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey treated us to one of the best ice hockey games possible. The N64 was ideally suited to a game of this sort – the analogue controller gave you fine fluid movement and the N64 allowed motion-captured detail never seen before. Since then, we've been waiting to see if these standards can be bettered.

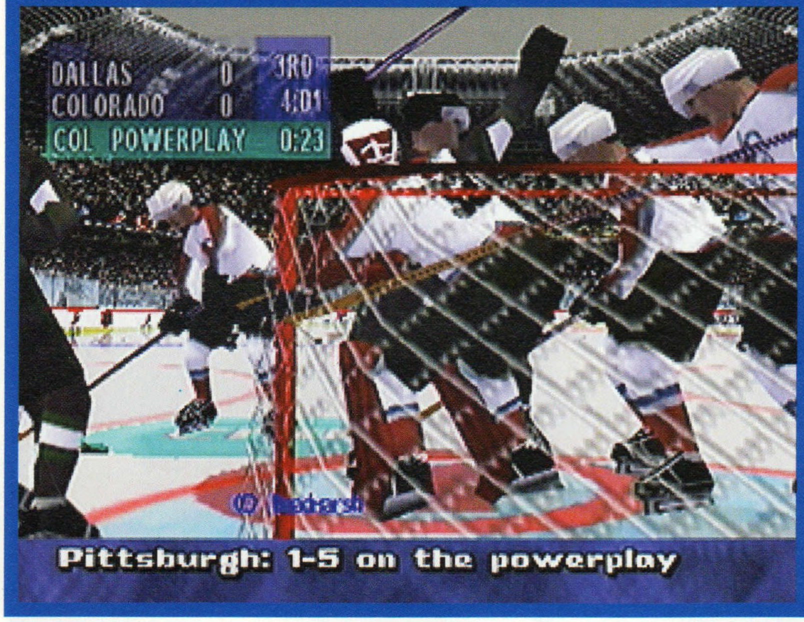
And first into the ring to challenge the Gretzker is Acclaim's *NHL Breakaway*. Has it got the necessary oomph to knock Midway's game off its icy perch, or is it the N64's first sporting also-ran? Will it have a screamer of a multiplayer game? And what's 'Icing' all about anyway? All will become clear...

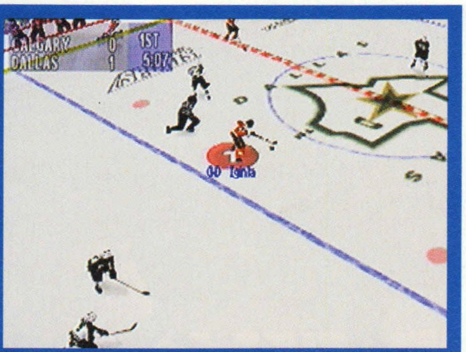


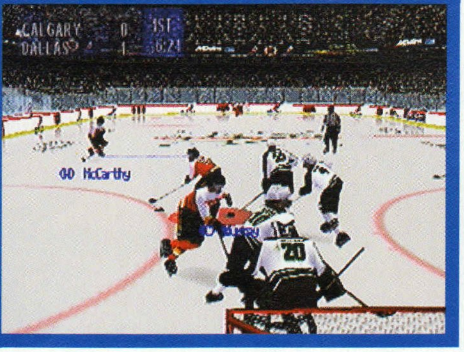
And there's the team emblem on the halfway line. Impressive attention to detail.

Isn't that the bloke from the Friday the 13th films in the background? AGH! Hide the cutlery!

▽ *Bit of a goal mouth scramble, but it's situations like these that often allow for that sneaky shot.*







AWAY '98

THE SHOOTOUT MODE

A good way to practice your shooting is do it through the option contained in the game that could only be called the 'Shootout mode'. It's basically the same as a penalty shootout in football, with each team having five attempts to try to score as many goals as possible.

You're given a time limit of 15 seconds to attempt a shot (and take your time, as there's no opportunity for rebounds) and we recommend you try as many different angles and strengths of shot before going headlong into a 'proper' match with the grown-ups.

ADJUSTABLE GOALIES

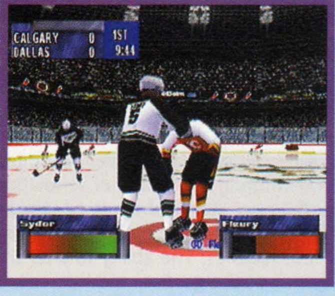
One of the nicest features in *NHL* is the opportunity to change the skill of the goalies in the game's options. Far too often it seems that the keepers in a team seem to be either far too good or completely rubbish, and it's this factor (more than most) that can go a long way to ruining a sports sim.

There's three separate settings for the goalies. 'Easy' is ideal for when you first start playing and want to practice your shooting, whilst 'hard' is better for when you think you've mastered the art – or want to test out any scoring 'soft spots'.

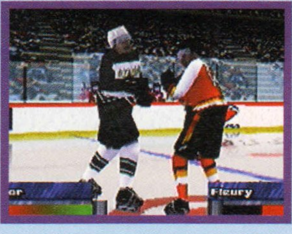
Fight! Fight! Fight!

To be perfectly honest, an ice hockey game wouldn't be an ice hockey game without the odd moment of frustration relief – going in early with your stick over your head and flooring your helpless opponent, for instance. Now whilst we'd be the first to admit that violence never solved anything, it does give you the chance to participate in this fighting sub-game.

◁ **1** *You may have done it deliberately, you might have questioned the honour of his mother or it might have been an innocent clash of body parts but, either way, the challenge has been made and a fight ensues.*

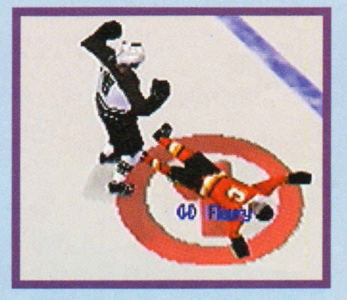


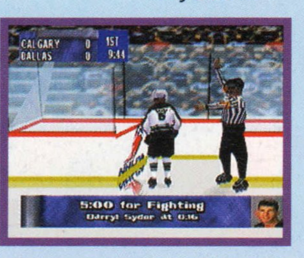
◁ **2** *He'll attack pretty quickly, so we suggest frantically pressing the C buttons to give you the edge. Hopefully you'll floor him before he has the chance to do it to you.*



◁ **3** *The fight's hotting up a bit and you're doing well. A strong combination of uppercuts and jabs seems to be doing the trick.*

AHA! You've probably just knocked his teeth straight down to his colon. Hope you feel proud of yourself. **4** ▷





◁ **5** *The moral lesson is easy to be seen, though, as, regardless of the result of the fight, both players are sent to the sin bin – usually for anything up to five minutes.*

GO! GO! ▷

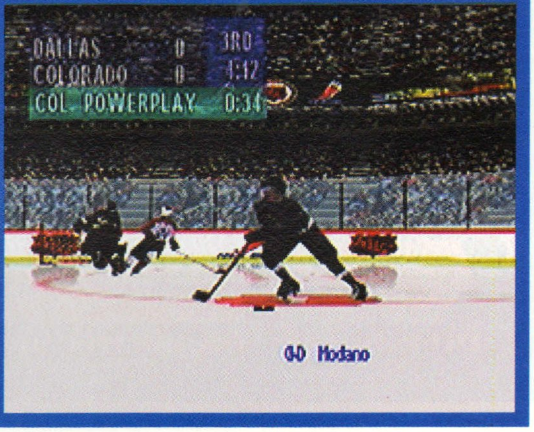
FOURSOME FUN
Like most sports games, long term life for *Breakaway* resides in its multiplayer mode. It's good to see here that the programmers have made things as easy as possible with little '1's, '2's, '3's and '4's marking out which real player controls which computer player (a far simpler system than the different shapes affair in *ISS64*), and the pace of the game is unaffected no matter how many people are playing.

Scoring tends to be tricky (until you learn the soft spots), hence the low scoreline.

Unless you're a true ice hockey fan, these team logos won't mean much.

There's no way on earth that that's going in.

34 seconds left on the powerplay... can I score in time, I ask myself?

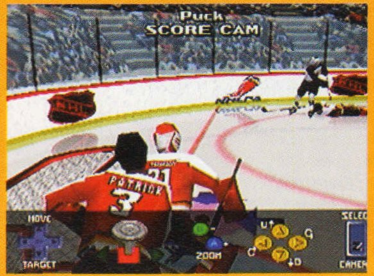


Captured in motion

With the standards of graphics and animation so high these days, you'd expect any game that involves motion capturing to be of a very high calibre. Whilst there's no arguing that Iguana (the developers) have certainly managed to get the majority of the game running as fast and smooth as is needed, there is an unfortunate trade-off in detail.

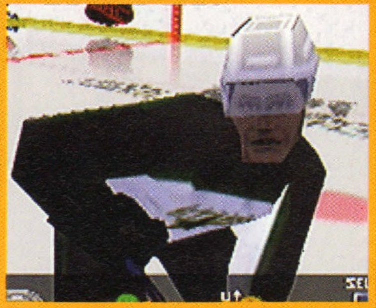
As you can see from this picture, the graphics are okay but definitely nothing special or ground-breaking.

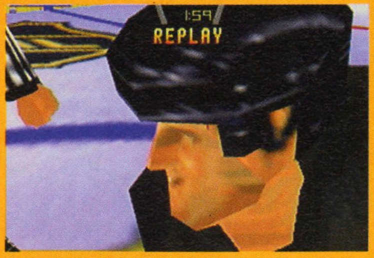
Players have their proper names and numbers on the backs of their shirts – nice, but something we've come to expect from sports games.



And, ye gods, look at their faces... it's Phil Collins! Slack melting face design does little to help the overall averageness of the graphics.

To make matters worse, the graphics don't favour well when you compare them to the slick, texture-mapped faces of Gretzky's Hockey. We might have laughed at their humorous expressions, but at least they didn't look like the ex-lead singer of Genesis.





In the world of computer games, we've come to expect titles such as these. Destined for massive success in America, they eventually filter through to Europe to pick up a few more sales. For every *GoldenEye*, *Mario Kart* or *Diddy Kong Racing* there's a handful of licensed sports titles, just waiting to fill up those empty spaces in the shelves of Electronics Boutique and the like. Is it a bad thing? Certainly not, but, to be perfectly honest, for every one that's outstanding, there's another half-a-dozen that are, at best, average and, at the very worst, bogged down with irrelevant statistics and detail. Sadly *NHL Breakaway* '98 falls neatly into the average bracket.

The developers, Iguana, have made a name for themselves producing quality sports titles for various formats, but you get the impression here that they seem to have got a little bored with it all. Everything's neatly in place and functioning in its proper manner, but there's no excitement, no originality. Basically, there's nothing to make you want to rush out and buy the game.

When compared with *Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey* (its only opposition), there's very little to tell the two games apart. Both play very well (with the analogue controller being used to great effect) and each has a satisfactory range of options, playing modes and adjustable features but, lest we forget, the *Gretzky* game was nothing ground-breaking either.

Pulling the game apart we find smooth motion capturing, an arcade or simulation mode, the now-standard range of views and the complex replay option, and a few other nice touches. The ability to alter the intelligence of the goalies, and referees, is a welcome inclusion for both beginners

Peachy tips

If you're not a die-hard hockey fan, it's easy to get a bit lost in the cut-and-thrust of *Breakaway*. Winning, though, is a matter of mastering the basics and remembering these handy hints...

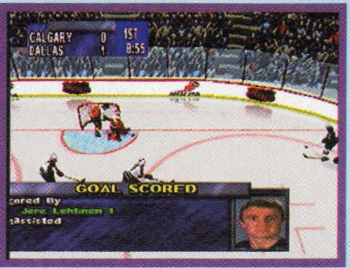
Computer-controlled players

When you first start, computer controlled players cope with matches far better than ones under your control. The defence slip back nicely when an opposing attack is in progress and they're excellent at body-checking the other team – especially when they're close to the wall. Therefore it's often a good strategy to leave challenges to them and concentrate on getting your forwards in place for a pass up front.

Face-offs

After every foul, or at the start of each of the periods, you're faced with one of these. You can, of course, just press a button wildly and hope that you manage to pick up the puck when the ref drops it but, a better strategy is to wait until you see the red circle that indicates that the puck is in play. Then (and only then, mind you) should you press the pass button. If your reflexes are quick enough you stand a far better chance of winning.

Scoring



The most important tip of all, how to score. The easiest way – if you're lucky enough to be in a position where you've got a clear run to goal – is to carry on straight towards the goalie and then to veer off slightly to either side of him as you approach. By shooting from here you stand an excellent chance of slipping the puck in at the side. It's a 'hot spot' familiar to anyone who's played a lot of ice hockey games.

The referee

It's wise to set the level of the referee to 'lenient' when you first start playing. As much as you may want to fight your way through each opponent that comes near you, you'll find the game a lot easier, and quicker, if you tone down the ref to begin with.

and more advanced players, and the attention to detail is impressive (national anthems are played at the start of matches and team emblems are marked into the halfway line). However, none of this is enough to recommend *NHL* over its rival.

The game runs pleasingly fast and, thanks to the tracing and glow on the puck, it's simple to follow the action as it speedily zips from end to end. The computer-controlled opponents behave very intelligently, as do the ones on your team. When the other team are attacking, your defence will move back to protect the goal rather than simply rush in as a pack and, when your team go for an attack, you'll usually find at least one player has moved into an attacking position to support you. On the downside, though, passes can be a case of trial and error. The lack of either a marker, to show an off-screen team mate, or a pitch radar, means that you often have to try a pass without knowing if there will be anyone on the end of it.

Tackling is fast and furious (as befits the sport), with all computer-controlled players, regardless of their side, quick to attack. However, a slightly confusing control set-up means that the game will usually hurtle along without you until you get a chance to work out how to master the basics. After a good few hours play, this is less of a problem, of course, but even so, *Breakaway*'s controls will always present a challenge.

Surprisingly enough, there also seems to be a bit of a slowdown problem when too many players congregate around a goal. It's not worryingly noticeable, but if you find yourself on the attack with a couple of team mates around you and a strong defence in front, then there's a noticeable drop in frame rate, compared to when you're powering up the pitch with no-one in sight.

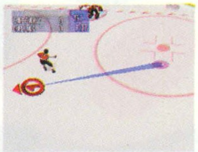
One way to try to combat this is to change the playing view. There's a total of eight available in the game, ranging from the standard overhead, sideways on and isometric ones to the more varied TV cam way of viewing things. In practice, though, they're of limited use. In some you simply can't see enough of the action, while in others (especially if the camera is very close-up), players either vanish completely behind scenery or the scenery itself performs a disappearing act to put David Copperfield to shame. It's all very well having eight mixed views in a game but if half of them render the game unplayable, or unrewarding, is there really any point?

Graphically the game is only average. The motion capturing is of a high enough quality but the detail on the players is noticeably lacking – even more so when you compare it to *Gretzky*. The biggest difference between the two games is in the amount of detail in the players' faces. A small point, granted, but it's the small points that help to make *Gretzky* more rounded and professional.

Whilst *Gretzky* was an almost-perfect N64 version of a very popular sports simulation, *NHL Breakaway '98* is just a few rungs lower down that elusive ladder of perfection. When *NHL* fails to compete with *Gretzky*, it doesn't miss by an enormous mark but, unfortunately, there're enough failing points to make a real difference when it comes to choosing the best ice hockey game.

DEAN MORTLOCK

◁ *Out for three days? Mr Reid must be made of strong stuff. I'd be out for at least a year. And constantly whimpering.*



PUCK DETAIL
Much like *Gretzky's 3D Hockey*, the puck leaves a trace behind it whenever you either pass or shoot it. With ice hockey being such a fast game, this is certainly an advantage – as is the healthy red glow that surrounds it.

Also, when you power up one of the faster shots, the tracing turns yellow to indicate that a more powerful shot has been taken. Surprisingly enough, though, these sort of shots are very often the ones that miss; it's the rebounds or the clever runs that are more likely to get the goals.

5 VISUALS
Small amounts of 64-bit detail, but not enough advancement over a 32-bit hockey game.

7 SOUNDS
Organ noises and small samples for when a foul or goal is scored. What you'd expect, really.

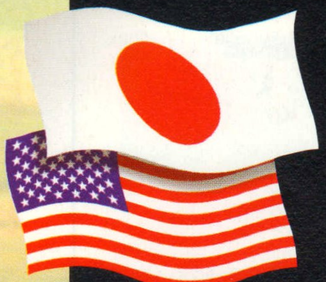
3 MASTERY
Very little here that couldn't be done on a PlayStation or Saturn.

6 LIFESPAN
There's plenty of game options but you'll be bored before you've explored them all.

VERDICT
NHL Breakaway '98 is just a painfully average game.

62%

IMPORT ARENA



The games reviewed from this page forward are so far only on release in Japan or America. Because **N64** is fully independent from Nintendo, though, we can bring you reviews of them immediately. When they're released in the UK, we'll bring you a new, updated review.

PREVIOUSLY IN N64 *We took a Future Look at 1080° Snowboarding back in* **N64***/13..*

△ First-person view, and the sun's right in your eyes as you slip down this gully.

◁ Flaming torches light the way to the rickety rope bridge.

Hop off piste, and you'll find banks of deep powder snow. Sometimes you can disappear up to your waist in it. ▽

1080° SNOWBOARDING

N64 MAGAZINE STAR GAME

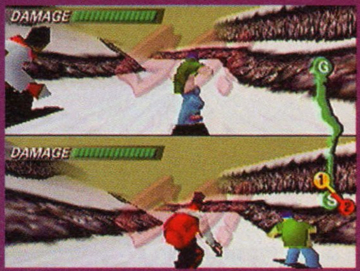
The team that gave us *Wave Race*, now presents the greatest game on solid water.

1080° Snowboarding			
NINTENDO			
Out now	64M		1/2
	Controller Pak	Cartridge back-up	Rumble Pak
¥6900 (£35)			

△ All this air, and all I could manage was a humble 180°. More practice, Ashton.

A firmly built, black-clad motorcycle courier stumbles into the office. The room fills with the smell of oily man in leathers. "Pfmmffh ffr ngnames ahhtnnn." He removes his crash helmet, a gentle shower of dandruff falls around his feet. "Parcel for James Ashton" he repeats, slightly more coherently. At last! *1080° Snowboarding* has arrived.

I sign the thumbstained chitty that's thrust at me, (turning down the opportunity to use the most-chewed biro in the northern hemisphere) opting instead for my fine, Parker fountain pen. Before the dispatcher has had a chance to tuck his head back inside his helmet, I'm in the **N64** games room plugging in *1080°*. It's two days before the mag's due at the printers and there's not a moment to lose.



Two-player split screen is full screen and almost full speed. It can be bit of a lonely experience.

Trick Attack – time and stunts count to your score.

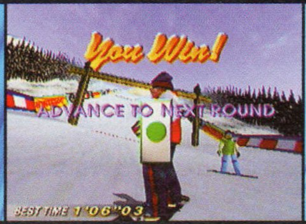
OPTIONS OPEN

It's a Nintendo game. They've thought about things. The Match mode is difficult enough to beat, but even if you do, the possibilities beyond it are enormous. The Contest mode is a real stroke of genius and the Time Attack, and Trick Attack, will doubtless keep our I'm the Best leagues choc-a-block with your entries, when the game gets a PAL release.

Option 1: Match Race

Objective: To compete in a four, five or six race contest, racing each time against one other competitor.

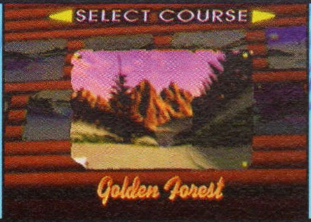
Notes: You start a Match Race with three lives. Each time you fail to win on a course, you lose a life and must re-race that course. The first four courses for each Match Race are the same, meaning that there are a total of six courses in the game.



Option 2: Time Attack

Objective: To race against a ghost recording of your time, in an attempt to record the fastest downhill time for any of the six courses.

Notes: Ghosts can actually be saved on the cartridge memory, which is a bonus. As ever, it's patient time-attacking that reaps dividends in the Match Races, as you become more familiar with the best racing lines of each course.



Option 3: Trick Attack

Objective: To race a course, within a set time limit, scoring as many points from stunts as possible. Time spare at the end of a race is translated into points.

Notes: Points are awarded according to the difficulty of the stunts you pull off. The easier courses have purpose-built ramps, but for many of the others, you'll have to make use of the lumps and bumps in the scenery.

Option 4: Two-Player Game

Objective: To beat the chimp sat next to you.

Notes: Better than *Wave Race*, in that it remains full-screen and keeps far more background detail, but slightly disappointing in that there's a loss of speed. The two-player mode is the ultimate test mano-a-mano. It's great for two players of similar skill, but once one gets a good lead, it can become a disappointingly dull experience.

Option 5: Contest

Objective: To compete on downhill courses with gates, alternating with trips to the stunt arenas.

Notes: What a gem of an option. Not only does weaving in and out of left and right gates add a whole new dimension to downhills, the point structure means that the quest for ever better scores, will go on for months longer than the game might otherwise have lasted.

LOOKS COOL

There are three game views, and far from only one being useful, you'll find time for all of them.

The default view is behind your boarder and level (top pic), but this can actually mask some vital scenery such as moguls (bumps and hollows) and the flags in the Contest game. The second view eliminates this problem (middle pic) but is a bit less exciting to play with. The final view (bottom pic) is first-person and scary. On a big screen, you sway with the action, and can easily find yourself feeling seasick.

TRAINING

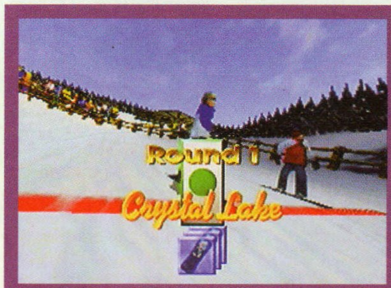
The Training mode makes up the last of the main game options, and offers you the choice of a sequence of straight jumps, or a good long run down an enormous ice half-pipe. The straight jumps offer on-screen instructions, which progress through the range of stunts, each time you successfully pull one off. We're warning you now, though – the *1080°* is nigh-on impossible.

GO! GO!

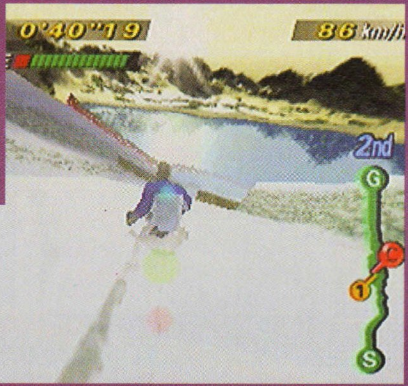
Crystal Lake

Breakdown

No easy introduction to 1080° then. The first straight of Crystal Lake contains four, monster bumps which will have even experienced players lying on their back with their feet in the air, wondering what went wrong. Later on – after a bowel-quaking jump – there's a sneaky shortcut that leads over a log cabin's roof and cuts out some evil left and right combination. The final straight contains a series of ramps which allow plenty of opportunity for stuntage.



To get a jump start, wait until the '1' is about to turn to 'go'…



…And then press forward and Z together. Easy really.

As you approach the giant video screen, it bursts into life with live film of your progress.

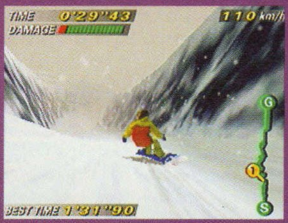
Crystal Peak

Breakdown

Although Crystal Peak shares the same last section as Crystal Lake, the weather couldn't be more different, with snowflakes replacing lens flares. The standout feature of Crystal Peak is the introduction of stretches of blue-sheet ice. If you've ever been lucky enough to go snowboarding, you'll know the way that 1080°'s boards rattle, and ice shards fly as you traverse the ice, is exactly, and perfectly, right. As for the noise, it's enough to send shivers down your spine.

Misting is used to cover up pop-up, but it's a long way off.

A double tap of R reverses your board stance.



Get it wrong here and it hurts.

"Hello there! My name is Ricky Winterborn and I'm from Canada. I'm more of a technique and stunt man, so you're best picking me for the stunt events. I've got a nice Parka, though."

Golden Forest

Breakdown

'Beautiful': that's the only word to describe Golden Forest – although 'stunningly-realistic' runs in a close second. This course is far less bumpy than the preceding two, but has the best deep-snow effects you'll ever see. It's not so much the way that the boarder disappears up to his waist (although that's fantastic), or the track left behind him (breathtaking), or even the spray of powder he throws up (too good for heaven) – it's the sound. Velvet silence. Angelic.

◁ Officially the best-defined shadow in the history of video games.

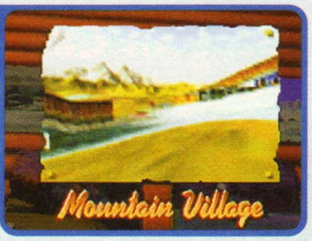
▽ Keep your nose up, and push forward to land.

◁ A parting of the ways. The left is tricky, but far more fun.

▽ Deep snow! Ohyes Ohyes Ohyes Ohyes!

◁ "Well Hi! I'm Akari Hayami and although the boys don't like to admit it, I'm the fastest racer to start with. Sayanora!"

Mountain Village



Breakdown

If you've been up a mountain, you'll know that the weather at the top is often nothing like the weather at the bottom. This is true of the Mountain Village course, where a snowstorm blows at the start (using effects borrowed from bits of Diddy Kong Racing) but, by the time you reach the bottom – and you're wreaking gnarly havoc in the village itself – the sun's out and shining, and you can admire the strange brand of car that the villagers seem to favour.

◁ Look at that trail! It's even got the board's edge marks in it.

In the barn door and out over – weyhaaaaaay – a very large jump indeed. ▷

▽ Over-hanging rocks can be a problem.

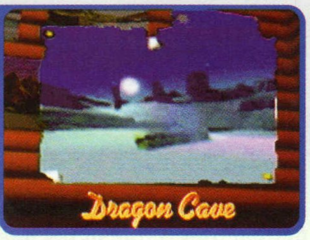
△ Multiple routes in the tunnel – it'll take ages to find the fastest one.

▽ Mind the chalet – you can't go in for Schnapps.

▷ "Hi, Kensuke Kimachi here. I'm your 'balance' character if you like – a good all-rounder and maybe the strongest for 'Contest' mode."

GO! GO!

Dragon Cave



Breakdown

For the vast majority of the game, 1080° sticks to straight simulation, but in Dragon Cave it allows itself to get just a little strange. Lighting effects favour purple and there are odd landscape bits, like rope bridges lit by flaming torches. Although you wouldn't guess it from the course map, there are multiple routes and side-tracks all the way down the course, with a fast time a case of remembering where to go, as much as being good at the game.

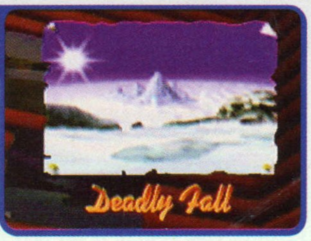
The start sets the 'odd' agenda. Metal arches line your way from the line.

Two choices: straight on for a deathly slip down a cliff, or an excruciatingly tight corner.

Not possible in real-life and one of 1080°'s few departures from total simulation.

"Hi y'all. I'm Dion Blaster, I'm into 'baggy' and I'm from the good ol' US of A. Sheesh am I fast! Corners? Yeah. More of a problem."

Deadly Fall



Breakdown

Not named lightly. Your first trip down Deadly Falls will probably end up with your damage meter reading 'full' and the St. John's Ambulance on the way to pick you out of the snow. Less a race course and more a wide open piste, success on Deadly Fall is a case of weaving in and out of the enormous rocky outcrops and avoiding getting thrown around too much by the relentless mogul fields. No, we've not beaten it yet. We were dead chuffed even to get here.

Snow spray and sunlight. If. Only I could. See. What's coming. Aaahhhhghgh!

Deadly Falls is a very wide piste, offering almost limitless descent paths.

Make it down in one piece and your prize is a 'buzz' from the copter.

△ You can control the camera angles in replays with the Top-C button. Chuffin' brilliant!

Whoop! Yeah! Woo-hoo! Snowboarding then. Not a sensible sport. If you want to fall down a hill with some wood attached to your feet, then skiing is a far more elegant way to do it. Sorry to tread on a few fashion toes there, but it's the plain truth of the matter.

However, where skiing is a bit, well, naff, snowboarding is the coolest thing since falling in a deep chest freezer and surviving on last years frozen runner beans. What's more – as *Snowboard Kids* has already given an excellent indication – it's the sport that the analogue stick has been waiting for. The sheer level of control in *1080°* is easily the standout feature of the game, and where any review must start.

As with *Snowboard Kids*, the key to the game are the gentle, backwards diagonal pulls which you use for steering. The sharper your diagonal, the more firmly your boarder angles his board into the snow, and the sharper the turn becomes. The more you hold a turn, the more perpendicular to the line of descent your character becomes and, with each passing foot of snow, the slower your rate of travel. And then you stop.

But while *Snowboard Kids* was happy to leave it at this, *1080°* takes things much further. Once airborne after jumps – or more usually after just the extreme folds and hollows of the normal piste surface – the analogue stick must be used to carefully balance your angle of flight. Lean back, and you start to tumble backwards, giving yourself an almost impossible landing problem. Lean too far forward, and you'll imbed your front teeth in the floor when you touch down.

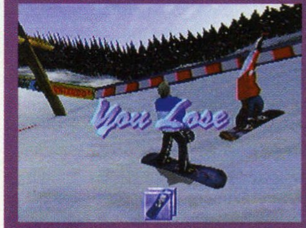
Further subtlety comes with the Z trigger, A and B button. Z activates a crouch, which can help your boarder go faster, but must also be used to land safely. A bad landing (a mistimed Z push) will lose you speed, a disastrous landing (no Z at all) will wipe you out completely. 'A' controls jumping, which can help you avoid a problem before you have to deal with it or enable you to get extra air for stunts, while 'B' is instrumental to the whole stunt palaver itself.

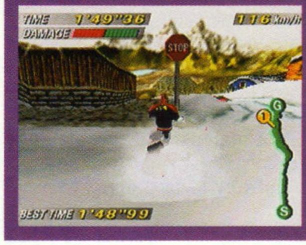
After the controls, the thing that really strikes you about *1080°* is how serious it is. Everything's for real: scenery, competitors, stunts, the lot. When you add in probably the most complex control system we've yet seen on the N64, you begin to realise that *1080°* is not for the casual player. If you're going to play it, you'd better prepare yourself for a lot of humiliating defeats, before you can even classify yourself as a 'bit good.' For all those people wondering whether the N64 was going to be forever marketed as a kids machine, *1080°* must come as a welcome change.

And it might be this all-pervading seriousness which means, somehow, we can't really fall in love with *1080°* as we did with *Mario Kart*, *Wave Race* and – to a slightly lesser extent – *Diddy Kong Racing*. One of the bigger problems, is that you can only ever race against one other competitor – even in one-player mode. There's no jostling for position, because there's no one to jostle with. However, with all its options, points scoring, and almost limitless room for improvement, we are prepared to admit, our opinion might change as we become ever more involved with the game.

1080°, then. Undoubtedly great but far from perfect. Difficult to acclimatise to and nigh-on impossible to ever fully master. It's not the crowd pleaser that is *Snowboard kids*, but it still deserves a dedicated following. Our I'm the Best leagues are trembling with anticipation.

JAMES ASHTON





◁ Something you'd better get used to, if you're to eventually get anywhere.

"Wey-hey. Look at me mum! Whoops. Ow. That hurt, actually." ▽

"Uh Hullo. Rob Haywood here. I'm your British representative, but to be honest I prefer a good game of pool. It's nippy out – wrap up warm." ▷

GREASY LAMAR

Every snowboarder in the country will doubtless be overjoyed to hear that all the boards in *1080°* are based on top manufacturer Lamar's designs for the 1999 season.

Once you've chosen your boarder from the Virtual Lodge, you can scroll through a variety of different boards with – believe it – different strengths and weaknesses.

Once you've got your board, it's time to decide which stance you're going to take on it – Regular or Goofy. Paul knows all about this from his misspent youth on a skateboard, but finding himself in the rare position of actually having an advantage at a game, he declined to let on what it was all about.

ACCESSIBILITY

Easy. You can switch to an English language version in the options menu. Brilliant!

8 VISUALS

Technical brilliance, but – it's all white! – lacks the jaw-drop of *Wave Race*.

8 SOUNDS

Brilliantly-observed sound effects but music to induce suicide.

8 MASTERY

Looks utterly fantastic, but where are the other racers? And the four-player mode?

9 LIFESPAN

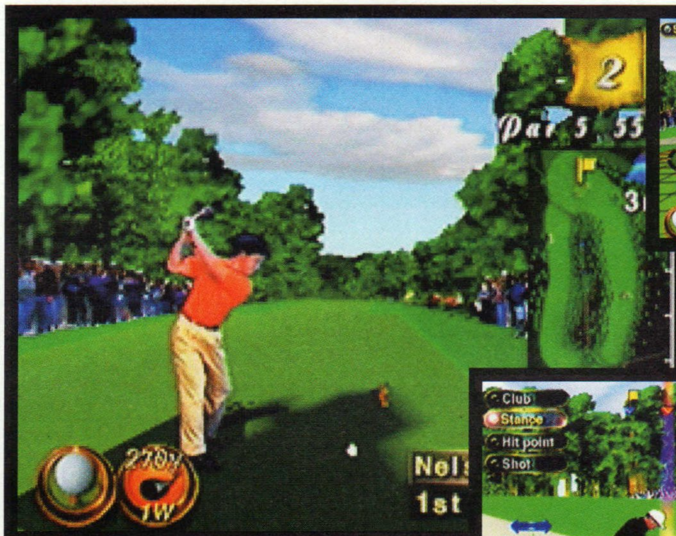
Very difficult to master. A gamers' game which, if it connects with you, will last for months.

VERDICT

We admire it for its brilliance, but somehow we don't love it yet.

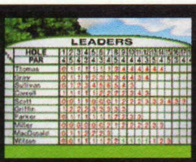
89%

SPOT THE BALL
Being the sporting magazine, **N64** is proud to offer its readers the opportunity to win the contents of the fabled office games cabinet. To claim such a prize, all you need do is spot the ball in the picture below. Mark clearly where you believe it to be, before sending it to the usual **N64** Magazine address. But ah-ah-ahh, be sure not to try and cheat. Because we'll know.



△ Augusta's players are digitised. Polygon-based players would look far better.

△ This grid overlay helps you play straight shots on the green.



◁ The score card. Play well and you get a mention.

So it was all a lie. There's no pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, just a golf ball. Bah. ▷

Augusta Masters
T&E SOFT

Japan: Out now	128M		1-4	
USA: Unlikely	Controller Pak	Cartridge back-up (crossed out)	Rumble Pak (crossed out)	
UK: Unlikely				
¥5900 (approx £30)				

Japan → UK
ACCESSIBILITY
There's a degree of Jap text, but anyone familiar with just about any golf game ever created will find *Augusta Masters* simple to play. But not, necessarily, enjoyable...

3 VISUALS
Almost universally poor. The digitised players are especially dodgy.

3 SOUNDS
Woodland sounds, cheesy music and two Jap commentators mocking your abilities.

1 MASTERY
A poor conversion of a simple game design that has long relied on visuals to impress?

5 LIFESPAN
There are four different play modes and a multiplayer option that doesn't remain satisfying for long.

VERDICT
Your N64 could run this with the power off. *Augusta Masters* is a poor conversion of a dated game design.

47%

AUGUSTA MASTERS

It has to be better than the *Glory of St. Andrews*, after all.

Over a decade ago, a control method for a golf game was developed that would become a blueprint for every one that followed. The basic premise was simple. By pressing a joystick button or key to begin a swing, the player would cause a power gauge to fill. Another press set the power of a shot, causing the 'fill line' to begin a return journey. A further press would confirm the accuracy of the shot. Should the line fall within a marked area, the swing was deemed correct and the ball would duly be struck in a suitably professional manner.

To berate *Augusta* for using this very same control method would be to criticise almost every golf game ever created. The golf sim is a game style that has, for many years, offered only visual improvements. The differences between *Leaderboard* on the Commodore 64 and *Augusta Masters* are almost entirely aesthetic. Bereft of its graphics engine, T&E Soft's golf title is, basically, the same game.

However, while golf games on other formats are still receiving favourable critical and commercial success despite using the same dated control method, they can at least boast an impressive degree of visual accomplishment. *Augusta Masters* can't. For a start, it uses digitised players. Like 'blue screen' special effects in old movies, this looks woefully dated, with the golfers appearing divorced from the backgrounds they're placed upon. Polygon clipping and pop-up are also rife on *AM*'s distinctly uninspiring courses.

Astonishingly, the ball – surely the focal point of any golf game – is often deformed, rarely appearing fully spherical. While a minor detail in many respects, it's hard to disregard such a brazen lack of effort. Sloppy workmanship is apparent throughout any *Augusta Masters* tournament, though. The coloured streak that highlights the ball's path while airborne isn't a stylised touch, but a sneaky way of concealing the fact that – while in flight – the ball is barely visible.

But, and perhaps worst of all, slight tweaks to the standard golf game control method make visits to the putting green less than enjoyable. Only with much trial and error is it possible to discern the power needed for each shot. Many casual players will find their eagles becoming bogeys, their satisfactory pars lost simply because the putting control method gives so few clues as to what is required from the player.

Why did the golfer pick his nose after finishing the par three? Because he had a bogey. Why do golfers pack two pairs of trousers before embarking on a golfing tournament? In case they get a hole in one. Why, are we telling rubbish jokes when we should be giving you comprehensive buying advice based on *Augusta Masters'* merits and flaws? The answer is very simple: spend sixty pounds of your hard-earned cash on this, and you too are unlikely to find much to laugh about.

JAMES PRICE

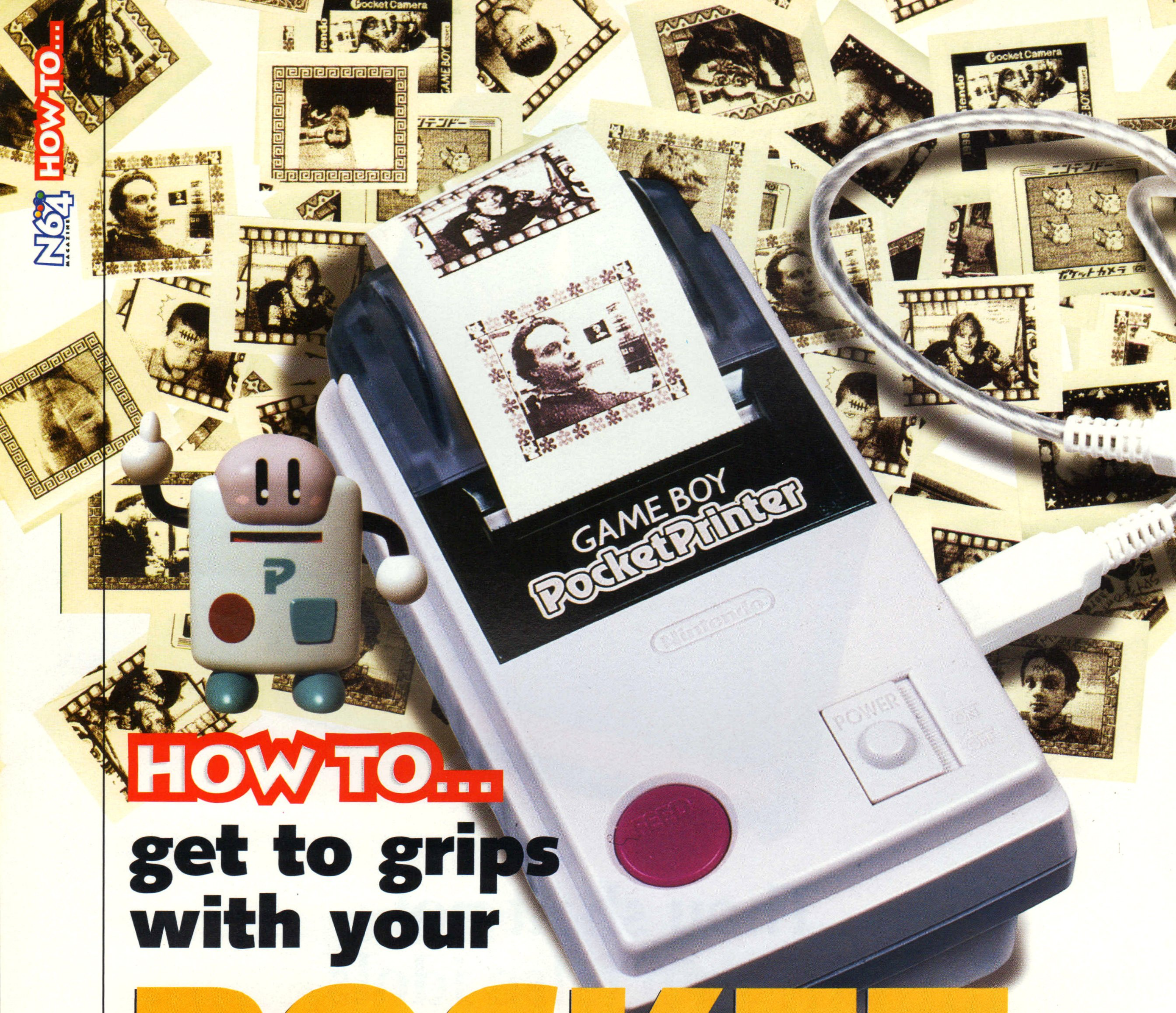
Thou shalt not worship false idols

***EDGE**, VERSE **56**, CHAPTER 3.98*

AWARDS

EDGE 56 ON SALE FEBRUARY 24

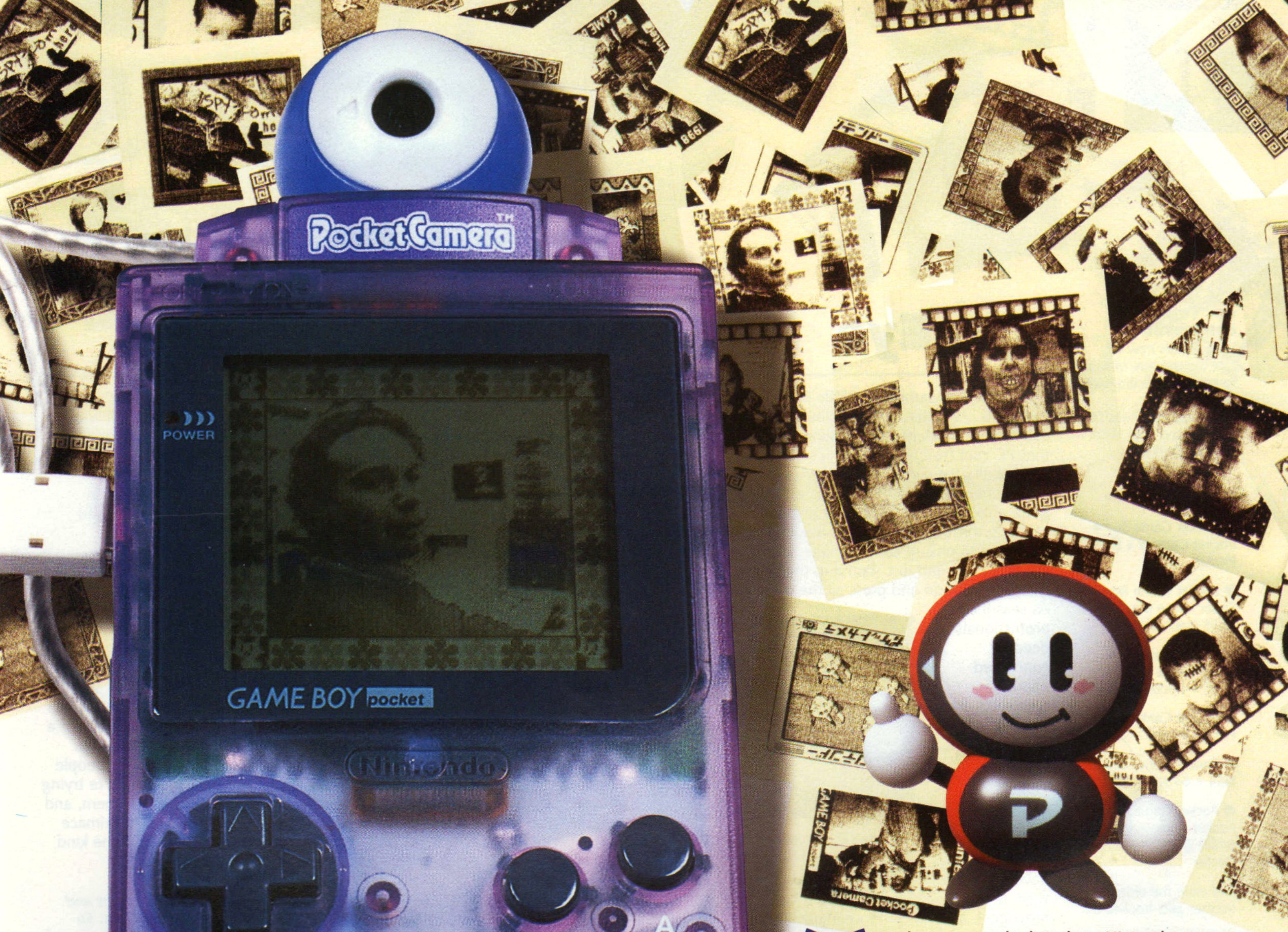
VIDEOGAMES MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR 1997

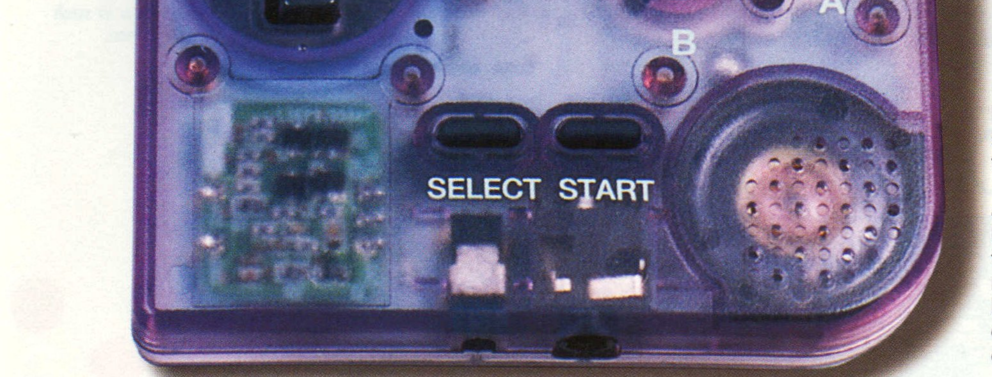


HOW TO...

get to grips with your

POCKET CAMERA





You have to wonder how long Nintendo can go on calling it a Game Boy; it was launched about a thousand years ago, lived longer than the Game & Watch, outlasted the Lynx and Game Gear, and has even seen several big-gun consoles come and go. It should really be called the Game Senior-citizen, but somehow that doesn't have quite the same ring to it.

In any case, as if it wasn't enough of a thrill to be carrying a menagerie of monsters around in your pocket, Nintendo have gone and found another sure-fire winner application for their little tyke. We'd loved to have been in the marketing meeting when they thought this one up. "Right then. Every kid in Japan has gone mad over print club stickers. They all own Game Boys. The Game Boy has an LCD screen, just like a digital camera. Hey, I've just had an idea! What if..."

And so the Pocket Camera and Pocket Printer were born. We have to admit to being fairly sceptical sometimes about Nintendo's 'visions of the future.' But in this case, the boy's done good. Both machines work brilliantly, are intuitive to use, small, cheap and a whole lot of fun. What can they do? Join our guided tour...

GO! GO!

Nintendo are God. Here's the proof...

SYSTEM

by Max Everingham

GET YOURSELF CONNECTED
With all this new kit, and the promise of more to come, there are loads of different combinations of stuff to play around with. Take a look at all this...

- Pocket Game Boy
- Pocket Game Boy + Pocket Camera + Pocket Printer
- Pocket Game Boy + Super Game Boy 2 + SNES (sepia shots!)
- Pocket Camera + Super Game Boy 2 + SNES + Pocket Printer
- Pocket Camera + Pocket Printer + N64
- Pocket Game Boy + N64 + 64DD
- Pocket Game Boy + Pocket Camera + N64 + 64DD & disk + Pocket Printer

and even the older brother gets hooked up:

- Game Boy & Pocket Camera – via 2 cables – Pocket Printer

Eye Eye

The Game Boy camera is a little marvel, really it is. Available in four colours, to match your machine, and looking just like that PC cam from Connectix, it's basically an eyeball on a card.

There are two ways you can go about getting to grips with your new toy: read carefully through the manual, following each step to ensure correct usage, or forget all that and just slam it in the slot thingy, switch on and press all the buttons. As seasoned professionals, deeply concerned about conveying an accurate picture to our readers, we naturally opted for the latter 'ere, what's this do, then?' approach. This may not have been all that wise, in retrospect, as a quick non-exhaustive count yielded around 25 modes and at least 100 different effects. This made botch jobs frequent and getting what we were actually after a labyrinthine task.

The start screen with three, very clear options.

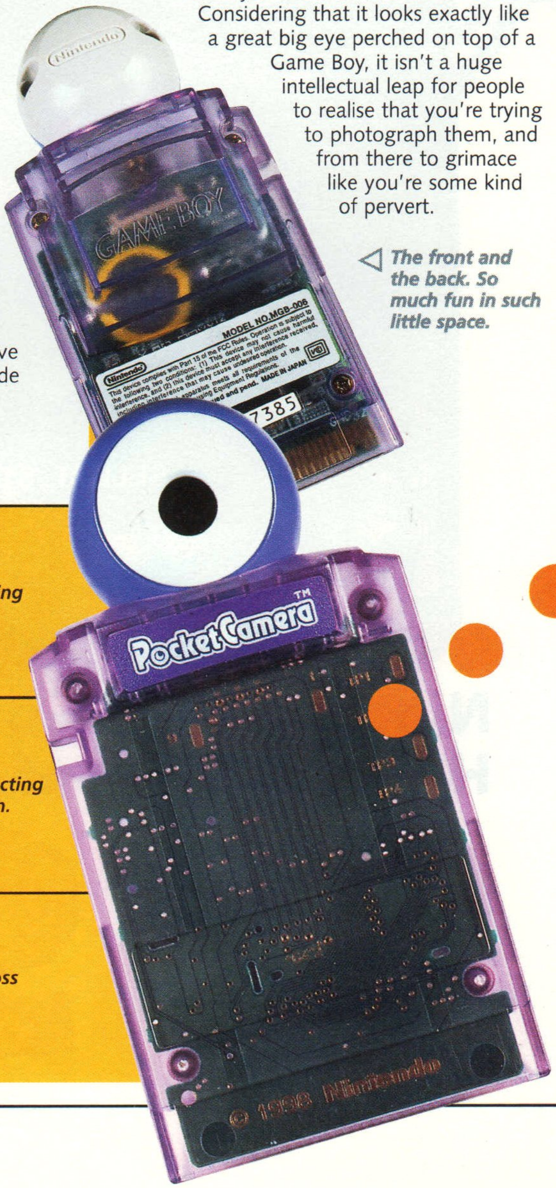
Surprise surprise

We weren't expecting the first screen. Instead of a mug-shot swimming haltingly across, it was a bit of a surprise to be asked to 'register' the game, inputting name, date of birth and blood type. Just in case you get hit by a bus whilst distractedly snapping the fit bit in front of you, supposedly.

Once the formalities are over, you're presented with a start screen with three main options for you to select from: Take, Look and Play. Nice and simple. The first option leads into more options, but if you just choose the default, you're straight into picture-taking mode. Unless you've already checked out the eyeball's cunning swivel feature, your own lovely image should be looking right back at you.

The second option from the main menu allows you to review and select pictures you've previously taken, singly, in a slide show or animated. The last, 'play' option itself has two options (are you still with us?), explained in more detail below.

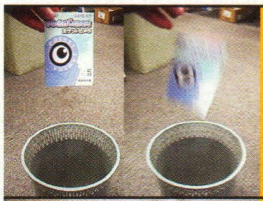
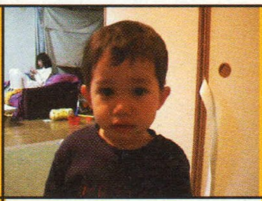
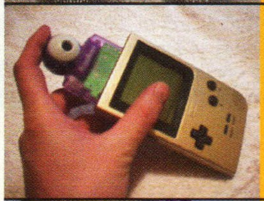
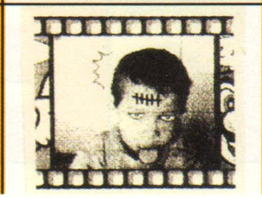
Don't go thinking that any of this is complicated, however. Every single function is represented by an icon, in keeping with the target audience, and therefore easy to get the hang of. Additionally, if you have the sound turned up (we didn't), you'll discover that each screen has a signature techno-style tune to help the action along. The only drawback with the Pocket Camera, in fact, is that it's terribly difficult to take covert shots. Considering that it looks exactly like a great big eye perched on top of a Game Boy, it isn't a huge intellectual leap for people to realise that you're trying to photograph them, and from there to grimace like you're some kind of pervert.



The front and the back. So much fun in such little space.

Dipping your toe in 1

Nothing could be simpler to use. No, honestly, nothing.

	*1) Naaaaaaahhh!*		*4) Find unsuspecting victim.*
	*2) Right, Gates, are you watching? THIS is plug-and-play.*		*5) Capture unsuspecting victim on screen.*
	3) Press and hope for the best.		*6) Subject to gross humiliation.*

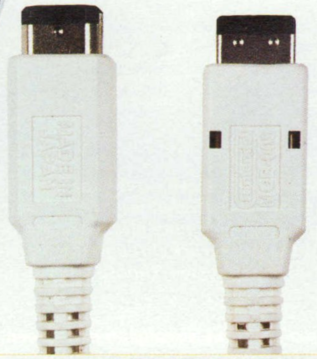
And here's the evidence!

Pocket Printer

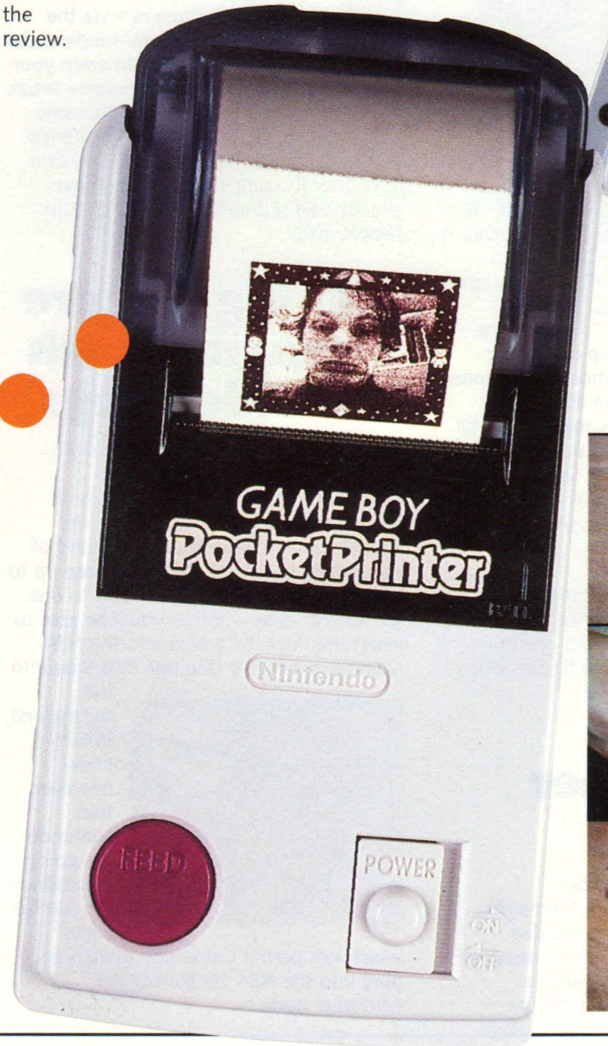
Continuing with the comparisons, the printer looks like someone's nicked the top bit off a shop till and tarted it up a bit. But not much. This is a purely functional bit of kit – and setting it up is as straightforward as you'd expect. Weekends working at Sainsbury's came flooding back as we opened up the till roll, seal paper, sorry, and threaded the leader through the metal teeth. Once the batteries are in, it's just a case of hooking up the optional cable and switching on. Ah yes, the cable, let's not forget the cable. Only rank amateurs would forget to buy such an essential item at the same time, and be forced to trek all the way back to the store to get it so they could test it all and write the review.

Options, choices, alternatives, selections. Whatever you call them, Nintendo have kept up the pace with the Pocket Printer and more decisions have to be made when it comes to the special 'seal' paper (the back peels off so you can stick them everywhere). A regular roll is included in the box, but once you've used all that up, the next dilemma is choosing between blue, pink or yellow sticky stuff.

Battery intensive, yes, but all Japanese stuff comes with batteries included!



You'll need this cable and an adaptor if you've got an old-style Game Boy.



Printing your creation out couldn't be easier, either.

TECH SPECS

Pocket Camera
Memory: 8 Mbit + 1 Mbit (SRAM)
Resolution: 128 x 128 dot (16384 pixels)
Colours: Monochrome (4 shades of grey)
Focusing: 20 cm to infinity
Dimensions: 57mm x 111mm x 37mm
Weight: 55g
Price: (Japan) ¥5,500

Pocket Printer
Colours: Monochrome (4 shades of grey)
Data transfer time: 6 seconds
Print time: 13 seconds (1 screen)
Print width: 26.6 mm
Price: (Japan) ¥5,800

Printer 'seal' paper
Paper width: 38mm
Paper length: 4m
Print capacity: 110 screens
Colours:
White (prints as: sepia)
Green (prints as: black)
Yellow (prints as: black)
Price: (Japan) ¥500

Super Game Boy 2
Dimensions: 128 x 125.5 x 24.9 mm
Weight: 150g
Price: (Japan) ¥5,800

Dipping your toe in 2

1) See what I mean?

2) Sorry to keep you waiting, I just have to change the roll...

3) Batteries included, cable not. Obviously.

4) Pick a suitable creatition.

5) Select 'print' from the 'Communications' menu.

6) Voila!

GO! GO!

The main menu

1 TAKE
Here, you're given five choices (Take, Item, Magic, Check and Run Away). This is what they do:

- **TAKE**
This is the straight camera mode. Swivel the eyeball in the direction of your subject and press 'A'. The direction buttons control contrast and brightness and are represented by sliders at the side of the shot.

- **ITEM**
Here, you can set a self-timer or opt for continuous servo shooting.

- **MAGIC**
Now we're starting to get creative. The 'magic' mode presents another array of options:
a. Lens tricks – 'hall of mirrors', zoom in, stretch, or multi-pane (nine modes).
b. Montage – compose a single picture from several different shots (seven modes).
c. Panoramic – two modes each for composing and printing.
d. Game Model – this is a bit of an anomaly, presumably providing the 'game' element to Pocket Camera. It's a simple juggling game, reminiscent of the Game & Watch classics; the twist being that you select the character's face. First, take the shot (the oval picture which is then plonked onto the juggler), then you're off. High scores are saved on the card's internal memory.

- **CHECK**
This allows you to review the pictures stored on the card. There are seven pages containing eight slots and divided into 'film A' and 'film B' (unalterable), which amazingly gives you more storage space than most digital cameras 20 times the price. Flick through the album using the direction keys and press 'A' to select (see 'choose your weapon').

- **RUN AWAY**
This shows a humorous sample shot and is really an exit screen.

2 LOOK / REVIEW
This gives way to a screen bizarrely-entitled 'Sporadic Vacuum'. You have two main choices:
a. Look – unlike the 'Check' option, 'Look' only allows you to review the pictures one by one.
b. Review method – run a slide show, animation and the odd 'Pictrip'. With Pictrip, users can choose a sound (from 32), a graphics effect (from seven), split photos into four different segments (1/4 each) or make a 'fusion' effect which superimposes one picture onto another.

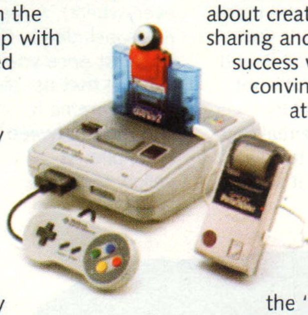
3 PLAY
Simply pressing 'A' will take you directly into a galaxian-type screen where, depending on which space invader-type you shoot, you go either to the 'ball' (juggling) or the 'DJ' (music composition) game. Pressing 'Select', on the other hand, causes the little Pocket Camera graphic to swivel around and disgorge four further choices: Communicate; Collage; Edit and Graffiti.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON
Once you've selected a stored shot, it's time to play. Pressing 'A' a second time causes six sub-menus to appear around the picture frame. From here, you can elect to print, swap images with a linked Game Boy, change the frame (there are 18 different surrounds), add a written comment, erase the picture, add a pre-defined stamp or use the paint tool. Use the direction keys to go to each menu and press 'A' again to begin.

Super Game Boy 2

Also launched this month in Japan is the Super Game Boy II which allows you to play Game Boy games on your SNES with a bit of added colour. More importantly, it allows you to enjoy your pocket camera antics on the big screen of your TV.

Coming in a "clear blue", meaning see-through, case, the SGB2 also gives real meaning to Pocket Monsters 'red' and 'blue' versions. With the SGB2, the games boot up with an appropriately-coloured 'Pikachu frame' (nine types available), which you can then rotate. Boy oh boy. To be fair, Pikachu comes out yellow, Zenigame blue, Purin pink and Strike green – what more can you ask for?



The Super Game Boy uses the same link cable you bought to connect your Game Boy and Pocket Printer. Presuming you remembered to buy it, that is. The SGB2 is marketed primarily as a means of putting the famed Pocket Monsters up on the big screen and, to that end, most promotional literature you'll see for the adapter is swarming with marginally-more-colourful renditions of the Pokemon posse. The next step, already announced at Space World of course, is the N64 Game Boy adapter which does the same thing, only in spades.

FEATURES

• Communication cable-compatible, so you can use it with the 6-player tap. • Sports a red (SNES) power lamp and a green communications LED which flashes when data is being transferred.

All together now!

Nintendo has thought out this convergence malarkey very thoroughly. The boffins in Kyoto have provided multifarious connection options designed to bring all these cunning gadgets together, and you can't help but be impressed. Taking just the three we've looked at, you can take a picture, put it up on the telly, add sound, graphics, text and special effects, then animate it. Later, when you're happy with the results, you can print out a hard copy to show around (snes.jpg). And we haven't even mentioned the N64 or 64DD yet.

Nintendo are evidently very serious about creating games which emphasise sharing and creativity. Their runaway success with Pocket Monsters has convinced them that Game Boy users, at least, want to trade the results of their works with friends and have made it possible via the Game Boy link cable.

Consequently, the same feature exists with the Pocket Camera – via the 'Communications' mode under the 'Play' menu, you can swap your works of art with pals with the same setup. We can't see this having quite the same appeal in the UK, but in Japan, Nintendo have a winner on their hands – only two days after its launch, most stores have already sold out and are having to turn people away.

The big picture – hanging with the older boys

The ability to write to the 64DD disks provides further opportunity for expansion. The 64DD disks already in production allow animation, and the Pocket Camera already acts as a kind of camcorder, so it's not that big a step up to writing short home-made movies to disk. It's not yet clear whether you'll be able to insert the Pocket Camera into the N64 Game Boy adapter (the one that slots into the controllers). We do know, however, that Nintendo are going to produce the '64 GB cable' which will permit Game Boy owners to plug into the N64 via the regular controller ports.

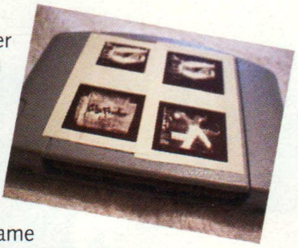
But does it tell the time?

Top ten uses for the Game Boy Pocket Camera

You *could* wander around simply using the Game Boy camera to take digital pictures of stuff. You could, but that'd be really boring. We've racked our brains here at N64 Magazine and come up with a few other more tangential uses...

1 Fantasise

Look, this has gone far enough! Now's your chance to bring the mountain to Mohammed. Simply take a picture of any Square Soft game, print it out, and affix the resulting sticker over the regular label on one of your N64 carts. It's the next best thing, really it is.



2 Weep

Or do the same for any Saturn or Psx RPG, in fact.

3 Ensnare

This isn't really necessary in Japan, to be honest, but you can never be too sure. Hook the Pocket Camera up to your new 64DD via the N64 and employ as a budget home security system. The batteries last for ages so you don't have to worry about it giving up at the crucial moment, and you can print off the mugshot later to hand in to plod.

4 Letch

Take clandestine snaps of luscious members of the opposite sex while they're standing unsuspecting on trains (for instance), then take home and review at your leisure. And if you're particularly sad, there's always the Super Game Boy 2 to add a little colour around the edges.

5 Accuse

Take covert pictures of family members providing irrefutable proof of who ate the last chocolate biscuit.

6 Take revenge

Take pictures of known PlayStation offenders owners down your local games store. Use the 'paint' tools to draw bolts through the neck, pipes and slippers and otherwise generally deface. They'll soon get the message.

7 Humiliate

Use the 'Frame' and 'Stamp' functions to manufacture Pri-kla (Print Club) stickers of your overly-macho mates (or enemies). Stick them all over your school/ university/work noticeboards to their eternal embarrassment.

8 Torture

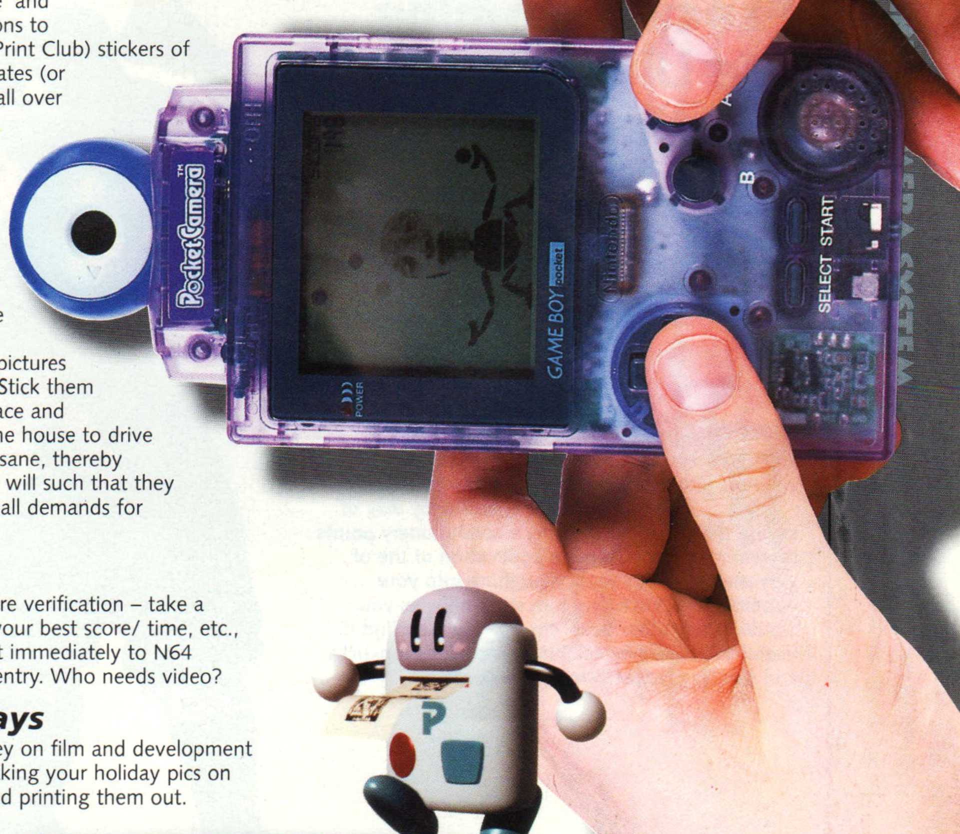
Use the 'Stamp' feature on Pocket Camera to print off hundreds of pictures of cute little Pikachu. Stick them on every smooth surface and piece of furniture in the house to drive your parents totally insane, thereby bending them to your will such that they will instantly agree to all demands for new games.

9 Boast

Rapid high-score verification – take a screenshot of your best score/ time, etc., print it out and send it immediately to N64 magazine for compo entry. Who needs video?

10 Holidays

Save money on film and development costs by taking your holiday pics on the Pocket Camera and printing them out. Obviously this works best if you holiday in areas that are predominantly black and white anyway. The antarctic, say, or a coal mine.



Candid camera

If you can think of better uses for the Pocket Camera, or indeed any alternative words for 'option', send them straight in to us at the usual address, marking the envelope 'Beware the human thesaurus.'

HOW TO...

smite all and sundry in

FIGHTERS DESTINY

Fancy becoming the Ultimate Fighting Machine in the N64's best beat-'em-up yet?

by Jes Bickham

To paraphrase Homer J. Simpson, "You couldn't fool this game on the foolingest day of your life if you had an electric fooling machine". Which is by way of saying that *Fighters Destiny*'s revolutionary points system requires a bit more application of the ol' grey matter, than simply ploughing into your opponent and smacking him willy-nilly, as you would in any other beat-'em-up. You may find it useful to prepare by catching flies with chopsticks and painting fences. Wax on, wax off...

PREVIOUSLY IN N64 There was a huge, seven-page review of *Fighters Destiny* in issue 13.